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THIRTY-FIVE YEARS
OF A
DRAMATIC AUTHOR'S LIFE.

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS
OF A
DRAMATIC AUTHOR'S LIFE.

BY
EDWARD FITZBALL, Esq.,
Edward Ball
AUTHOR OF

"NITOCRIS," "PILOT," "FLYING DUTCHMAN," "SIEGE OF ROCHELLE,"
"MARITANA," "MOMENTOUS QUESTION," "CROWN DIAMONDS,"
"BHANAVAR," "MICHAEL SCHWARTZ," &c., &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

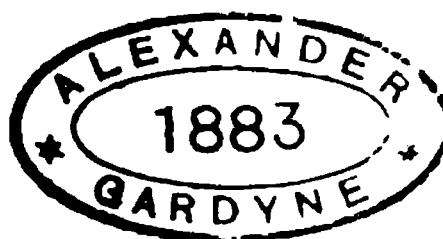
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INTRODUCTION

THOSE who, like me, have gone over nearly forty years of the drama, and witnessed the picture of the past, must, I think, award to it the palm, if not of merit, of *originality*, which is, certainly, the more creditable of the two to any nation justly proud of not resorting to the peacock's feathers. The drama of the present day seems nearly almost all composed of translations; the real merit, then—that is to say, the *inventive* merit—must be awarded to our French allies in particular. The drama of the last half century was more the coinage of *English* brains. Till the termination of the last French war, the language of the Parisians was but sparingly spoken or

known here, and French works more difficult to obtain ; consequently we had such original authors as Sheridan, Goldsmith, Reynolds, Cumberland, Morton, and even Doctor Johnson, who considered the writing of a five act tragedy the highest summit of attainment to which the human mind could reach. It is not to be questioned that all and every one of these learned authors knew French, but a different and more national feeling pervaded the mind in those days. A man would not have felt honestly satisfied to have translated another man's work without acknowledging the *fact* ; and however excellent the translation might have been, would have fallen far short of the credit at that time awarded to originality. But as those authors only wrote for the Theatres Royal, men infinitely less erudite or pretending, who, so far from understanding the French language, scarcely understood their own, were the writers principally employed at the minor theatres. Where invention failed, the sword was not unfre-

quently nor inaptly in the time of war, resorted to to fill up the gap which literary deficiency left open. The most affecting concluding speech of a minor drama was often and unfailingly a broad sword combat. But this will cease to be a matter of surprise when we reflect that very little more than even half a century ago, it was only bettermost people who could read; many men of wealth, immense wealth, too, could scarcely sign their own names; the alphabet was a sealed book to thousands, and tens of thousands. There were then, but two classes—the learned and the unlearned. The Theatres Royal naturally pertained to the learned—the minors to the unlearned. Yet, with all this advantage, the balance of originality, so far as it went, generally inclined to the minors. In proportion as the former declined, the latter, aided by the rapid stride of general education, like a young settlement, grew rapidly up and glorified itself.

In the first instance, the Dibdins, Tom and Charles, stepped in to the aid of the

Surrey ; Moncrief, Macfarren, and Milner to the Cobourg, now the Victoria, then a new theatre. The works of these men gave quite a new complexion to dramatic affairs on the other side of the water—that is to say, on the other side of the Waterloo Bridge. Actors and painters of a very superior quality, and genius flocked to the newly-raised standards, who had lingered long and hopelessly to display their prowess and their talents at the great national houses.

The next mighty luminary which reflected its lustre upon the so-called illegitimate drama, was the wonderful genius of Sir Walter Scott ; for although Sir Walter himself was no dramatist, his works were so dramatic, that, placed on the stage by such hands as Tom Dibdin's first, "The Heart of Mid Lothian," they assumed a new and magnificent feature, which even the theatres royal could not surpass. It was about this period that I myself, a very young champion, entered the lists, and threw down my gauntlet to the play-going world,

The "Fortunes of Nigel" became to me a brilliant triumph, the result of which will be fully told in the early course of the ensuing volumes; then such talented men followed in my wake, as Douglas Jerrold, Buckstone, Haynes, Serle, and a whole catalogue of others of great merit, with such painters as Stanfield, Roberts, C. Marshall, Tomkins, and the Wilsons, till at length, in the course of a few years, the minor theatres had risen to a pitch of grandeur and excellence, little or never anticipated by old stagers. The theatres, in their interior, became so magnificent as to elicit both wonder and astonishment; the Surrey Theatre being, at one time, decorated with gold and velvet, a Genoa velvet curtain covering the stage. The Cobourg, patronised by Her Royal Highness, the lamented Princess Charlotte, and Prince Leopold, decorated with one sunny glitter of gold braided mirrors, with a superb looking-glass curtain, which drew up and let down in the sight of the audience, and reflected every form and face

in that gorgeous house, from the topmost seat in the galleries, to the lowest bench in the pit.

All this revolution was the rapid march of learning, and, *originality*.

The minor drama at length attained to such a height as to excite not only the imitation of the nationals, but their envy and unavailing opposition, and reached the summit of its greatness, in the splendid production of many of the most finished and imaginative plays and dramas within the present annals of the stage.

The rise and fall of these matters, especially the decline of the national drama, with the great decadence of fine actors, occupy the faint colouring of the ensuing pages, from a detached diary, kept during a practical acquaintance with the stage of thirty-five years. An individual life, such as from want of the combination of similar circumstances, cannot occur again beneath the notice of living man; a life which, although sometimes, so deep down as to

exclude what was passing on the level of the water, sometimes too much on the surface to tell what was passing under the cresting of the waves, still supplies an amusing, if not instructive chain, which, though here and there broken, the mind of the intellectual reader will readily unite with an occasional link of his own, by which means he will himself become mentally an actor, and more interested in the gone-by scenes.

It is the history of a life, simple enough in itself, but through which the microscopic lens of philosophy, from its commencement, will discover the incipient impulse and end, and no other end to be accomplished, since every attempt to pass over its barrier failed. A water disposed in itself to be still, but into which great rocks and vast masses of volcanic eruptions seem to have fallen or been cast, to lift it up, in spite of itself, to the culmination, its apparent destiny, heaven best knows why, to accomplish.

I cannot apprehend that the enlightened

reviewer of the present day will attempt to crush this truthful work on any tortuous wheel. It is, after all, but a broken string of unpretending facts and anecdotes for the information and entertainment of such as take a more than common interest in stage affairs. As regards the underhand sort of attacks made on me in my youth, at this distance of time, when I look back to them without any longer being subject to the heartburnings they excited, and think, despite of their more than stormy opinions, how my argosies still sailed, and still sail calmly and merrily on, I am almost astonished that they ever distressed me ; yet, I *was* treated thirty odd years ago, something like the poor boy, Macaulay speaks of, who, being ferociously arrested by Claverhouse and Westerhall for simply not being of the same opinion as themselves, and told to pull his bonnet over his brow and be shot ; the spirited lad refused to pull his bonnet over his brow, and *was* shot. I refused to pull my bonnet over my brow to men of

similar dispositions, but have, fortunately, been reserved to tell my own story—to tell, to boast of a new revolution, even amongst reviewers.

The great march of instruction, the expanse of knowledge, which has done so much for the million, has made them capable of judging for themselves. Thirty years ago the mass had to be told what they might like, what they might not, according to the opinions, or pretended opinions of certain Charlatans. The public is now, every man his own critic, capable of seeing through the machinery complex as it was of such abuse as then existed, consequently, a manly and noble system of truth and liberality has sprung up amongst the reviewers of the present day, like the bright progress of their country—another consummation long devoutly wished for, and far more felicitous and cheering to the young aspirant for fame, however dreamy or friendless his attempt, or his genius.

When I turn into ridicule pretenders on

the stage who obtruded there, pompously to sneer and dictate, like Snarl in the *Critic*, without one practical idea in their heads, frightening the author, and even the manager, with a false literary pretension, especially a dramatic pretension of any kind, the allusion is by no means general, and merely refers to such sort of pretenders to the art of getting up plays as Monk was, who, a cavalry officer, being appointed to the post of admiral on board a man-of-war, and wishing to change the position of the ship, called out to the great amusement, especially of the *old* sailors “*wheel to the left!*”

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS
OF A
DRAMATIC AUTHOR'S LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

It was near Newmarket, so celebrated, all over Europe, for its horse races, in the rural and romantic village of Burwell, in Cambridgeshire, a village scarcely, at that period, known beyond the limits of its own county, that the author of these pages was born. As some may be apt to confound this secluded spot with the more well-known village of Barnwell, about a mile distant from the University of Cambridge, I must here take the liberty to point out to them that, by looking on the map, they will per-

ceive it lies at least eleven miles from the great seat of classic learning, where it was, in those days, almost as little heard of as it is at present in this mighty metropolis, London ; one side being screened, from the traveller's observation, by the great Danish embankment which crosses from the border of the fens at Reach, to the furthest limits of Newmarket Heath ; and the other by the vast marshy level which extends as far as the eye can trace to the venerable and picturesque cathedral in the Isle of Ely. In this old English nook, in an ancient house, overshadowed by a stupendous hollow elm tree, of great antiquity, designated the "Cross Tree," your humble servant first saw the light. The house, afterwards disposed of, his father purchasing a still larger estate, is now, from the convenience of its size, converted into a public-house, exulting in the unpoetical appellation of the Old Fox. It was told me, in after years, that my mother, having already presented my papa with six little pledges of connubial love,

had carefully put aside her *trousseau d'enfant* as an *heiress* loom for one of my sisters, and, after a lapse of several years, given up all ideas of any further progeny, when I began to make it known that there was in existence one other, who, at least, was pretty well resolved to force his way into the world, namely, myself; and, having reached it, the sturdy noise I set up, so startling and unusual in a calmed-down house, became so annoying to my father's greyhounds, that coming, *en masse*, to the door of the lying-in chamber, they joined more unanimously than harmoniously in the howl which sensitive dogs are wont to indulge in at the sound of a barrel organ or a flute: Whether this implied that my voice was very musical, (it did not grow up so,) or whether it was an ill augury of my future fate I am unable to decide—except that it seemed to be more applicable to the latter than to the former. Of musical talent I had but little to boast; Misfortune became my inheritance.

Before I could well comprehend the change, my father had removed with his family into his new estate, "*The Rookery*," and it was there that I always *seemed* to have been born. The reader must now fancy the scene an Elizabethan sort of house, or even perhaps more antique than that, an immense old pile, with rudely carved gable ends, of black solid oak, and deep narrow latticed windows—almost too narrow for the purpose of admitting air or light; short doors, and tall chimneys; some of the doors perforated in the form of a cross, as a sort of look-out before the admission of a stranger, or even a friend, and studded all over with bosses of diamond cut-iron; such were the precautions necessary to be observed in society in the early days of those probably still existing portals—which should throw some light on the word *port-holes*. Many outhouses, and many acres of well-planted and well-wooded meadow land surrounded, on all sides, this oddly-fashioned dwelling of the olden times,

to say nothing of the venerable and century grown trees of the rookery at the back of the mansion, from which it derived its name. Then, there grew, on the southern side a coppice of intervening hazel, white-thorn, and woodbine closely woven together, with an incalculable number of the most exquisitely-scented violets—*such* violets!—primroses, lilies of the valley, and wild flowers of all descriptions, over the deep-wrought foundation of some old abbey or cloister, once dedicated by the doubtless lazy monks of St. Lawrence to their patron saint—so have I since gleaned. Alas! for the lazy monks and fat abbot, if such existed, where be they now? Their altar! their fishponds! The one an unknown spot; the others dried up in their foliage-covered depths, a matter of conjecture; but that only to the reflecting few; the peasant entertains not one idea on the subject. I dwell lingeringly on this truly hallowed spot, for it was in its dream-like solitude that I felt the first ray of poësy, or imagination, enter my mind.

I could not, even in my earliest years, see spread around me so many beauties by the hand of nature, without following that hand with my *heart's eyes* up to the All-sufficient Bounty from which it was extended. And as it was my delight to pass whole days in this tranquil retirement, a boy solitary, I soon taught myself mentally to inquire into causes and effects, and whys and wherefores, which I could not even casually have heard explained by the lips of others, being then exceedingly deaf, owing materially, I suspect, to the dampness of that fenny atmosphere to which, at all times, I hesitated not to expose myself. This peculiarity, I have no doubt, had much to do with my remarkable love of retirement and abstraction even when a child, and led me to seek information and delight in the silent book of nature, which I could never have acquired without much difficulty from the actual *voices* of my parents, and my companions.

But, by the way, I should perhaps have set out by telling you a little of my parent-

age. I believe such is the time-authorised custom of all narrators: I will do so.

My grandfather was the celebrated Dr. Ball, of Mildenhall. He married into the Isaacson family, and lies buried with his wife, in a tomb, by the side of the church near the entrance to the Abbey Gate, St. Edmund's Bury. My grandfather was killed by being thrown from his horse.

Of the Isaacsen family I retain but little recollection, except that they seemed to me to form a whole clan of parsons and doctors: One of them from his presenting me when a boy with a flute, I recollect more distinctly. He was called by every one Old Bob Isaacson, not out of disrespect, for he was universally respected, and I believe would have been as much offended at any other appellation, as a duke would to be called plain *Mr.* He was very facetious, and one of the most generous old fellows in the county. As a proof of his facetiousness Mr. Newby relates the following: A gentleman, a London sportsman, whom Bob had picked up in his numerous avocations,

(for he was a great land auctioneer after the manner of Robins,) came down *constantly* as the 1st of September, bringing with him a sporting friend to shoot upon Bob's manor, and live at Bob's hospitable table in his princely mansion near Newmarket. These devoted friends, in the luxuriant fare of their generous host, had only one regret, which was, that though year after year they devoted themselves to live like fighting cocks, during the *whole* sporting season with Bob, Bob never would put himself out of the way to return *their* visit in London. Now this was unpleasant, nay distressing, to men of liberal minds, who wished on their part to show Bob something like a grateful sense of the hearty John Bull welcome which he never failed to accord them.

At length, business, not pleasure, brought Bob to town, when, having an hour to spare, and finding himself within the very neighbourhood of his two *disinterested* friends, although he could not remain long enough

to allow them to indulge in their display of that gratified generosity which he conceived, judging by himself, their warm hearts would be too anxious to gloriole in, he could give each a hearty shake of the hand, to prove to them the truthfulness of his esteem, and his conviction of the delight they must feel at seeing him in the great metropolis. Bob called at No. 1, sent up his card. This *friend* was sorry, he was dressing to go to the Stock Exchange. Bob, the best natured man in the world, thought that the rise or fall of the funds, no doubt, depended on such vigilance as prevented such a friend from rushing down stairs into his arms. He, therefore, with a Pickwick smile upon his jovial face,—so truly jovial,—stepped, or rather waddled, for he was very short and stout, across the square to *friend* No. 2. Again he sent up his card: a sort of scuffle ensued, and Bob, who had, with all the familiarity of a guest, certain of a pressing welcome, wandered perhaps further into the passage than strict *etiquette* required to look

at a splendid painting of dead game, heard distinctly from a well-remembered voice—
“What a bore!—tell him I’m out of town; I shan’t be at home for a fortnight!” Bob did not wait for the message; he had a great horror of untruths, especially of the mean vice of compelling a servant to speak one, and therefore without loss of time departed.

The 1st of September returned; the *friends* had written as usual announcing their anticipated arrival, dogs and all, by the Doublebody; Bob was on the alert. Rat, tat, tat, tat; the sportsmen are on the clean white steps outside. The groom, a stout fellow, opens the door.

“Is Mr. Isaacson at home?”

“Is your name Mr. G.?”

“I am Mr. G.”

“Oh then, that’s all right. Master is wery sorry, but he’s busy a-cooking a rump steak, and can’t be spoke to——”

“But, my good friend, I’ve come all the way from town, expressly to see your master,” vociferates the other, with an insinua-

ting voice. "I'm his intimate friend, Mr. T."

At this instant Bob presented himself at the extremity of the passage, a white apron on and a gridiron in his hand, as if to confirm the groom's unpleasant intelligence, exclaiming in his auctioneer's voice :

"Who's that?"

Groom. "Measter T. from Lunnon."

Bob. "What a bore! Tell him I'm out of town, and shan't be home for a fortnight."

"Master's gone to town, and won't be home for three weeks," roared the well-pleased groom, slamming the ponderous door in the face of the mortified cockney-sportsmen, with a bang which nearly made the guns under their arms explode.

My father was a gentleman, therefore, of respectable family, as you see, and also of good estate, having so much, at one time, as five hundred acres of freehold land, all his own, lying in the village of Burwell. My mother, whose maiden appellation was

Fitz,* had been married previously to the Rev. Brundish Marker, of Bury St. Edmunds, where he preached; but dying of apoplexy a year after his marriage, (though not thirty years of age,) left my mother a young widow, without issue, possessed of a pretty fortune, situated both in Bury and in the city of Norwich, of twenty or thirty thousand pounds. And this fortune, she brought afterwards, to my father; so that, with her estate and his own, which I have already shown was somewhat considerable, he ought to have prospered well enough in life. But unfortunately there was a upas tree which overshadowed him, and consequently his family, not far off; that upas tree was *New-*

* Proud enough she was of this name, believing, from tradition, that her great ancestor was a natural son of William the Conqueror, by a Saxon lady; certain it was that her great grandfather held a grant from the Conqueror, of a piece of land called Fitz-Follie. He was a great agriculturalist, it appears, in those days, and tilled his own ground with a silver ploughshare, such being a mark of high distinction in barbaric times.

market. Ah ! I reiterate that word with bitter recollections, while memory calls back to me the tears, the night watchings, the heart achings, the vain entreaties of my poor mother, and the weak professions of my father, to stop ere ruin had absorbed all, in the horse-race and the dice box. The infatuation amounted to a malady ; it was incurable. Ruin came ; my father died, still a young man ; our estate at Burwell mortgaged to the roof, and the estates of my mother, which she patiently resigned to him, one after the other, alike sold and lost. Poor, deluded man, with all his faults, he was principally his own enemy ; would have done a good turn, as he did many, to any one, even to those who most wronged him ; and had he been less truly generous, and more austere, he might have been better thought of after his death. I was scarcely eleven years old when this misfortune happened. My elder brother at sea, a midshipman in the service of his Majesty. There was still to carry on

the estate. My mother was robbed and cheated on every side. At length, at the simple age of twelve years, I took upon myself the management of the whole farm : the cultivation of the land, the sale of its produce to the merchants, and, in the course of a few years, by unremitting zeal and industry, had paid off several thousand pounds of the encumbrance.

It was my evil destiny nevertheless, to be constitutionally afflicted, from a child, with an extreme sensibility, which led me at all times, like a sensitive leaf, to recoil naturally from the approaches of strangers, and even every-day people and every-day events, to shrink back into my humble self, and the solitude which I preferred and loved : God always provides for the infirmities of His creatures. I had an intuitive knowledge of painting, of poetry, of sculpture : Not but what I had beheld such things at the house of my cousin, Dr. Sandiver of Newmarket, who was medical attendant to the Prince Regent. This

gentleman had many very fine paintings and sculptures : I had often seen them. I felt an immediate desire to imitate what I had witnessed : and my attempts, although my colours were often squeezed from flowers, and my statues composed of wood, were not without wonder and commendation, even from the informed, as well as the ignorant. My poetry, however, was my brightest plume ; my greenest laurel ; I delighted and revelled, marvellously, in the *rural*. How should other ideas possibly have come across my imagination ? Before I could well write or read, my infatuated father would compel me to stand on a table, and recite all sorts of doggerel rhymes of my own to people, who, no doubt, pitied both him and *me*. I almost wonder he never made an exhibition of me : It would have told marvellously now—but exhibitions were not then so plentiful as at present ; to be sure, there was the young Roscius ; but, he *was* really an extraordinary genius. Our precocious

modern tomtits would not have gone down then : No, nor many of the irresistably comic, and serio entertainments, of which even the newspapers give such florid accounts in the present day. After I had seen a play* I was at school then, at Newmarket, at Albertus Parr's, the painting and the sculpture became as airy nothings. I was *at once* a dramatic poet : I would gladly have been an actor, but deafness, as naturally apprehended, would have proved a sad drawback to that enterprise. It was something to be able to write : and to write *scenes*. This was a new source of glory : I made a theatre, painted the scenes and characters, and wrote the pieces myself : the managers of the present day can do no more. My father was enchanted ; my

* In the cockpit at Newmarket : " Cheap Living " and " The Farmer." The young Fishers', the manager's sons, came to our school—didn't I envy them the possession of the tin daggers which they sometimes stealthily brought, up their sleeves, to astonish the boys with—the elder Fisher, the manager was, I should say, a good comic actor, but the ludicrous way in which he lifted his wig up and down, is all I now distinctly remember of him.

mother, I must do her, good soul, the justice to say, never greatly approved these visionary poetical dramatical propensities : and frequently told me a melancholy story of one miserable, mad poet (Tasso), who died under very forlorn circumstances, without, as she expressed it, a *shilling* in his pocket : Poor Tasso !

The hint produced no salutary effect, I was already an incorrigible scene painter, master and tailor of a theatrical wardrobe ; author and manager, and what surpassed the managements of the present time, I could always command an audience, and a delighted one. It may seem singular, after what I have just stated, as regarded my retiring sensibility, that I should have been able to face my audience, especially in so many different capacities ; but, be it known that I was *always behind* the curtain, and the vulgar feeling of calling for the author, to have a *stare* at him, did not then exist in England, especially in *my* theatre ; and I *paid no one to do it*.

I must here digress a little, to relate an anecdote respecting my earliest dramatic production, which does reflect a credit upon me, I think, worthy of commendation, although it turned out none the less unfortunate for its good intention. My father had been dead but a short time, when, filled with real regret, at the many difficulties of my mother's widowed condition, I was struck with a notion of emancipating her, very shortly, from the load of encumbrances under which she seemed to weep and struggle in vain. How I set about my task, is worthy of a new chapter.

CHAPTER II.

I sat up, night after night, and secretly, wrote a tragedy in two acts: a musical, historical, *demoniacal* tragedy. When finished, I read it over and over again—to myself *only*—in a transport of perfect delight. It *must* do: Who was the manager in his senses *could* reject it? It was the time of the great annual fair, at Bury St. Edmunds. The players were there; I conceived the vast idea of going secretly to Bury, and of obtaining, I knew not how, an introduction to the all-important director of the theatre.*

I forgot my timidity: I forgot every

* My mother had frequently related to me anecdotes of Dr. Goldsmith, and how he produced his comedy of *She Stoops to Conquer*. This probably instilled into my mind the idea of presenting a play to a manager.

difficulty: I saw nothing but the *roll* of bank notes, with which I firmly believed the delighted manager would present me for my M.S., and which I, on my part, should, still more gratified, present to my mother: (consider reader, I was but twelve years of age.) Her look of joy and astonishment arose before me, in my dreams: Oh, it is pitiable that such illusions should vanish: but it is so, in this life for some good end, and daily, hourly, amid all our worldly experience, how many far more consistent and far more promising hopes fade around us?

Be sure I dressed myself finer than Moses, the Vicar of Wakefield's son did when he rode forth to sell the colt. I had to encounter a *manager*, a much more formidable king to encounter than a *real* king. I secretly, therefore, thrust the invaluable papers into my side pocket, and mounting my pony, proceeded with all my equestrian dignity towards Bury, where some friends of my mother would be delighted to welcome me; my good mother believing

that I merely wished to see the fair : She little dreamed what a happy return I meditated for herself. And I remember, that tears of joyful secrecy, flowed from my eyes, as I bade her, with ill dissembled feelings, good bye, and heard the heavy spring latch of the great gates clash after me.

From Burwell, by Newmarket, to Bury St. Edmunds is, I think, a ride of about eighteen miles : You enter the town by a long continuous street ; I looked every where, on each side for the theatre, which I am sure I should have known *by instinct*, had I passed it. During these researches my eye encountered a personage of no ordinary interest and consequence to me in my extremity. It was a *performer* ; I had seen him act at Barnwell, *near* Cambridge : It was *Frederic Vining* ! Ah ! he does not remember that day, which I recollect, but too well ; and also how *kindly* he directed the lad who approached him, as if he had been a deity, to the lodging of Mr. Hindes the

manager, thinking doubtless that the lad had brought a letter for a country bespeak. He never could have supposed that country boy carried in his pocket a *tragedy* of his own composition, in which was written a part, expressly for Vining himself; an *old Hermit!* but, of course, who turned out to be a *youthful* prince in disguise. Think of all this: think of the unsophisticated innocence on the one part, and the natural unconsciousness on the other. I apprehend, without detracting from its interest, I may venture to forestal the *dénouement* of my anecdote, by asserting that Vining never played the Hermit, although, many years after, he kindly enough did enact for me, in my first drama, and through his brilliant professional career, both in London and the country, in my various pieces played, as well as they could be played, “many parts.”

To cut this story short, after innumerable heart-burnings and palpitations: I summoned courage enough to steal from my friends that very evening and knock at the

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manager's door : was granted an *audience* : presented my tragedy. He was a good-natured-looking fat man, that Mr. Hindes ; I can see at this moment, his look of amused surprise as he glanced at the M.S. and enquired—" Did *you* write it ? " On being answered proudly, in the affirmative, he addressed me kindly, *very kindly*. I was to call early next morning for my sentence. And this is but a sketch, not filled out, of what not unfrequently takes place in older life, between *more important puppets*.

Fancy what an age of suspense it was for me to pass, till the next morning. There was no filling the chasm satisfactorily, but by going to the *play* : I did so : and while I gazed at the actors, and heard them applauded, conjured up in my mind's music, similar sweet approvals which were swiftly to follow similar exertions in my own exulting behalf. Happy delusion ! I had no idea, why my own tragedy could not have been performed the *ensuing* night. My attention, however, was soon absorbed,

even from myself, by the performance of a Mrs. Bowles, in Lady Macbeth. This grand, fearful delineation of that almost awful character, completely led me away: I have seen Lady Macbeth well acted since; even by Mrs. Bartley, (Mrs. Siddons I never saw,) but never, I think, did I see the iron queen of Scotland so magnificently personated as on that evening, by Mrs. Bowles, I admit that it was a first impression. It was also a *lasting* one. During the night, in my sleep, she appeared to approach the bed-side, washing her gory hands, and uttering those terrific words "Out, out damned spot!" I awoke perturbed, with the waking reality of having to face the manager, a conviction almost as terrible to my recollection as the solemn adjurations of the grim wife of the sanguinary Thane.

"Change we the scene," as Sir Walter would say. I am again standing in the presence of Mr. Hindes: His looks are gracious, very gracious! But the tragedy is *rejected*, I remember both his bland look

and his words. "Have you a *father*, young gentleman?" he said. "No sir." "Nor a mother?" "Yes sir." "Is she very fond of you?" "Oh yes! and I of her." "Give Mr. Hindes' compliments to her," continued he, "and tell her to spare no exertion to give you a good education, you deserve it." It was a compliment which I did not understand, although I felt that it somehow detracted from my work. I returned *blighted*: the manuscript fell, like a thunderbolt, into my frozen hand.* On my sad, solitary, humiliated ride home, disappointment overcame me, so the M.S. of my *first* tragedy flew scattered to the winds on Newmarket Heath.

* Had it been a thunderbolt, I should have flashed it fearlessly as the property man wields his resin torch behind the scenes, to the perfect annihilation of the Theatre Royal Bury St. Edmunds, and like a second Sampson, have expired in the ruins.

CHAPTER III.

From that time I passed almost all my days in attending to the farm, and went nowhere, except to Cambridge market, and an occasional Christmas visit to Lanwade Hall, the seat of the Cottons, to visit my relations the Isaacsons. This old feudal mansion, with its ancient moat, and Robert the Devil sort of chapel, was very interesting to me; I marvel that I have never heard it more talked of by Antiquarians. My friend Planche would write a charming volume about it. But my cousins, one branch of the Isaacsons, who were the inmates (some thirty years ago) of this romantic domain, knew as little of romance, as of poetry; it would have been just as consistent to have spoken to them of the then

scarcely conceived existence of *gas*. Yet, were they very worthy people, and hospitality and "*welcome*" the motto of their house. It was about this period that my brother, nine years my elder, who in the interim had been promoted to the rank of first lieutenant, returned home to reside, and I fear to think how like the envious brother in the Prodigal Son I became on that festive occasion: It was not that I did not love my brother as myself, but it was the difference I observed between us, and made between us. His dress, his coat trimmed with gold lace: then he wore a gold epaulette and sword.*

* These, with his easy and polished manner, made me look into myself. The contrast was anything but pleasing, I began to imagine that to go forth into the world must be something after the fashion of thrusting one's body into that far-famed mill, wherein enter we ever so old or ugly, we come forth young, handsome, and I suppose accomplished. I never calculated upon the crimps and tortures to be endured inside that mill, (the world). There was a courtesy, too, bestowed upon my brother, a deference which I more begrudged him than the fatted calf; it might be termed jealousy, it might be deemed ambition. There are those who would call it the *spur of destiny*, as Pope says "*Man never is,*" &c.

My father had left him his executor too. In every respect he had been better cared for than myself, and one day when my horse was led out of the stable for my brother to ride, without the slightest deference to me, except being told that I *must* succumbe to my *elder* brother and *walk*, if I had business to attend to on the estate ; I could no longer repress my mortification, my wounded feelings, my pride, call it any name you please : I was young, proud, oppressed, and flatly answered that I would no longer play the part of a slave, since my “ *elder* brother ” had come home to play the part of *master*. I had no idea of enacting a servant, and that I, in my turn, would go into the world, when it might happen to me also, to become of more consequence than I appeared at present, likely to prove in my home. I kept this resolution : It was the hasty resolution of a boy of sixteen ; and where is there not such a boy, ripe at all times, at such an age, for some new enterprise ? I

at first thought of going to sea, becoming like my brother: but the same means, and the same interests were now wanting. My great partiality for books, led me then to think, that I should like some pursuit in which they were essential; even to print them.* This resolve overcame me like a mania. It was a bite of my poor father's headstrong propensity, only not of so dangerous a tendency. Having once got this idea into my head, I could no longer rest nor repress it, and without having ever seen a type, much more a printing office, I eventually made my way to Norwich, and articulated myself for the consideration of a tolerable sum of money, for three years, to learn, what the world in its refinement calls

* I read somewhere, a flourishing account of the tranquil harmony of a printing office, the *glories* of the *press*, the benefit a printer was to mankind, the marvels of Dr. Franklin: In fact I fancied type was cast in silver, and the press something after the fashion of a delicate rosewood cottage piano. Such mistakes are hourly made by the inexperienced, wiser than I was, on points of tenfold import.

the *art*, not the *servitude* of letters. During this new and capricious apprenticeship, to which I had so willingly enchained myself, I will not say that I never repented, because I *did*, and often, and very, very often *since*: But, nevertheless, there were satisfactions emanating from this change in my position, in after time, which led to introductions and to happinesses without which its connecting link could scarcely have come to pass; and, much as I worship the country, there was, especially at that time, no sort of society, be it observed, in that obscure place, Burwell, which understood me: nor any sympathy with a poetical imagination whatever; whereas, in a great city like Norwich, or especially in London, a man of *any* turn of mind is sure to find congenial associates who know how to understand and to appreciate him, and nothing can surpass the satisfaction of such a conviction. To be something is the hope and desire of every ambitious feeling, therefore it is only natural that the aspiring mind

should incline towards the platitude where that something is to be attained. With no different or better ideas, perhaps, than the single-minded beings around me, I should not probably have quitted my native home at the mere pique of my brother taking possession of my horse, a boy's affront, a thing to be forgotten as forgiven, but such was the spur of my *intention*, and it is curious to observe, on my peculiar disposition, how that little circumstance operated, despite of myself, and excused me with myself, for turning my natural inclinations into a channel far more congenial to them, than the rustic sort of life which I had hitherto led and looked on as a *duty* to my mother, rather than a pleasure to myself. I was not fond of the pursuit of agriculture, we seldom like what is *forced* upon us: a boy seldom takes pleasure in his father's profession. I had other thoughts far apart from it,—they had been early inspired by books, and excellent ones. But where?

and how? you will naturally enquire, my father was no student, nor my mother; no, the books of my mother's first husband, the Rev. Mr. Marker, were all collected in an immensely large closet, in our old house: no one scarcely ever examined those books, save myself, and, such as I *could* read, I did read, over and over again. They consisted principally of religious works,—sermons, poetry, Shakspeare, Pope, Prior, Dryden, many very scarce and valuable volumes, with the *Arabian Nights*, *Don Quixote*, *Town and Country Magazines*, Sylvanus Urban's, and innumerable tracts added to this mental resort, from which I had extracted so much honey. I had lately seen *many* fine plays well performed at Newmarket, Cambridge, and Bury, and I must say if I felt any ingratitude at the monotony of my life before this event, that it became tenfold more monotonous after. These books, this play acting, and this printing scheme, combined together to bring about a complete revolution in my mind. I only

wanted some reasonable or unreasonable excuse, like my brother's favoritum, to toss up my cap of liberty. I obeyed the impulse: On such trifles are hinged destinies. A cunning, plodding fellow, although not the heir-at-law, might have kept his father's estate, have manœuvred to get rid of its encumbrances, to live and die in it. It *might* have been so with me, for, though of delicate health, I have, with the exception of one sister, outlived all my family. At the dawn of life, and the autumn of life, we see things with very different eyes, but I should, I confess, yes, even now be truly sorry to relinquish the many refinements of a superior intercourse with the congregated talents of existence, for any isolated condition whatever, however abundant with worldly advantage.

The moment of quitting home, when it did arrive, brought with it many a bitter pang, and many an involuntary tear. I loved my mother with an intensity of filial affection, and although I had a jealousy of

what I then considered her greater partiality for my brother, because she and my father had made him in education and profession a much greater personage than myself; still, let it be believed, that I loved neither *her*, no, nor *him* the less. I could not endure to be the *second* in esteem, and witness it; or, at least, fancy that I witnessed it, for

" To the jealous mind, trifles light as air
Are strong as Holy Writ."

When I came to trace for the last time scenes in which my almost dreaming childhood had passed, peculiarly, but not unhappily, away, my heart greatly humbled itself, but I was too proud to acknowledge it. I was going from my home, I knew scarcely whither, or for what. Certainly not to elevate my position in life; but of that I was not then wise enough to be aware. I had many repinings as I bade good bye to old friends, even the humblest, whom I did not esteem the less because they were humble. Then there were old

associations—scenery, in which every tree wore a friend's face also, whose whispering leaves had often spoken to me in melodies which my heart seemed to understand. The antique house, the old garden, the vast orchards, the golden-cupped meadows, and the romantic grove of St. Lawrence. They were to be lost sight of, perhaps for ever. The many nooks and dingles, and haunts of the wild birds, and the wild flowers, all in their natures so sweet that I alone knew of, that nobody else knew or cared to know of, they were to be forsaken and never again visited by such a visionary spirit as mine. Who else could understand the divinity of their beauty, peopled as my imagination had peopled them? Who can sympathise with invisible beings save the mind which created them? The Romans peopled springs, rocks, and caverns with imaginary deities, known and worshipped by all; who could sympathise with mine, known only to myself? But I forsook them sullenly for the more sub-

lunary world ; my mossy banks are now torn up by the plough, and the old ivy-mantled trees probably fallen long since a sacrifice to mammon—victims to the axe ; while he who was the high priest of such sylvan shrines and their chimerical rites, laughs at himself, as, at this far off distance, he contemplates in the stream of time his own changed image, and asks—is it possible this once was that devoted worshipper of *pure nature*. But what is changed?—youth only ; nature, I love thee still—thy forests and thy glens, thy dewy mornings, and thy starry nights, and, when I love thee not, “chaos has come again.”

Sad recapitulation of the parting hour : Farewell my native village, farewell the neighing steed, the tall spire o’ertopping my father’s tomb, dear, weeping mother—farewell ! The world is all before me, where to choose my place of rest, and Providence my guide !

CHAPTER IV.

WHERE was I? Oh, I had quitted my home, and the old farm, and turned printer. I was already disappointed; I felt greatly the loss of liberty; and, again, I was disappointed in *not* finding the congenial associates I had anticipated. There was a feeling of the old pride of independence, which I could only conceal, never stifle. My masters were not my masters—above me, yet beneath me. I was in place, yet out of place at the same time. I neither comprehended them, nor they me. They had taken me for my money, and I had gone to them with a mistaken view of reality. Everybody knows that *theory* is one thing, *practice* another. The printing

profession, although a most interesting and vital one, is both laborious and dirty, if we wish, as all ought who undertake it, to learn *properly* the *practical* part, which in a country office is the most essential.

A little reflection, however, speedily put right my mind, and put me as speedily on a better footing, not only with my masters, but with myself. I soon contrived to render myself essential to their interests, and became, consequently, much liked. I felt that I had thrown myself out of a sphere to which there was no returning; that repentance and regret were virtually unavailing, and in a very short period I would not have retreated had it been in my power. I became a tolerably good printer, contrived to get highly respected by every person employed in the office, which is as much as needs be said on this subject. There is, as every one knows, a Theatre Royal at Norwich. The company passes the winter there. As I was at no loss for money, I had frequently the gratification of seeing

plays much better performed than they are at the present day at *any* theatre in London. The company consisted of Mrs. Faucett, mother of the now popular Miss Ellen *McDon* Faucett; Mrs. Jones, a capital actress in Mrs. Davenport's line; Mr. and Mrs. Clifford, Beacham, Frederick Vining, Bennett, Smith, and Bellamy, with frequent stars, such as the elder Kean, Young, and Miss O'Neil, from London. What *could* be better? After my departure from Burwell, my brother succeeded indifferently with the management of the estate, my mother, now far advanced in years, wishing to retire, the house and land were sold for twelve thousand pounds, and they came after me to reside in the Lower Close, near the cathedral, Norwich. I found once again a tranquil home, with my own family, till the three years expired, for which I had bound, or rather engaged, myself. When the termination of my probation arrived, they would still have retained me in the office, and to do them jus-

tice paid me many professions of respect and esteem ; but I had a sister just married and living in Nottingham, I had made up my mind to go and visit her. I departed accordingly, and I speak of this little excursion with the more pleasure, inasmuch as it introduced me to the family of poor Henry Kirke White, who treated me as the family of such a poet would be sure to treat any one gifted with the slightest spark of talent or genius, or the smallest love of poetry. My brother, however, who was truly attached to me, still wrote and requested me to return to Norwich. I was also anxious to be near my mother, who was getting aged. There was yet another motive beyond all others why I wished to return previously to quitting Norwich : I had fallen in *love*. I'll tell you how. I was returning one warm summer's day from the office to dinner, when under the overhanging lime trees at the corner of the Close Garden, which turns up to the Dean and Chapter's Office, I abruptly en-

countered a young lady, who seemed to me something more than human—of a sweet, feminine, and woman-surpassing beauty. My time had come. As I paused still to gaze at her, like a person bewitched, or rather enchanted, she glided lightly past. I was too unimportant to have attracted any notice of hers, and long ere I recovered my rational reflection, she had disappeared, like one of my imaginary spirits, melted into air; while I, looking this way and that way, almost began to believe that my stretch of imagination had been carried a little too far, that I was walking about in a dream. It was no dream. We met again, and she became my wife. But you must hear how it all happened.

My ideas of the future, I mean the earthly future, were very vague. At nineteen or twenty we scarcely think of time. I suppose, like other simpletons at that age who are supported by their family, I saw all before me of the *couleur de rose*, especially as I was in love with a mys-

*Idiot
Boy*

terious unknown, which rendered it so much more romantic and interesting to me. Added to this I had published a little poem called "The Idiot Boy," of which, although Messieurs of the *New Monthly* did me the honour to speak in a most uncompromising way, I was somewhat conceited, and didn't break my heart as poor Kirke White did, especially as its publication had met with the kindest encouragement and commendation from *the* benevolent Bishop of Norwich,—*the best of bishops*,—Mrs. Inchbald, Mrs. Opie, and the celebrated Capel Loft, all of whom wrote me the most encouraging flattering letters, the more kind, inasmuch as the little unobtrusive poem of "The Idiot Boy" was almost wholly unworthy of their notice—I *own* it. Still I began to fancy myself somebody, little inferior to the Laureate, not a very high aspiration after all, and to feel the tips of my feet on the roses where I had long looked to balance them,—and the laurels round my head, where I had also aspired to wear

them. On excellent terms with myself, the ideal of the presiding angel which was to reign over my future kingdom of poesy floating in my brain, I was wandering to and fro amongst the heartseases and daffodils of my brother's little garden, when he came suddenly out of the house, dressed with the greatest nicety and exactitude, telling me he was going to pay a visit to two young ladies and their mamma, to whom he had been recently introduced by a brother officer, and that they lived at the house opposite, the windows of which o'er-topped the shrubs and trees of our little domain. Those ladies had read some of my lines !—so my brother told me—they had watched me from their lattices, wandering as I did amongst the roses and honeysuckles, and were curious, to use his own phraseology, “to come within close hail of a *real* poet.” Such was in fact his outline of a message, worded, no doubt, differently by the ladies.

My brother, who had a sovereign con-

tempt for anything not ship-shape, as T. P. Cooke calls it, presenting his despatches in this somewhat disparaging tone, be assured I felt somewhat indignant at the message, and, of course, declined an invitation to be stared at ; I always disliked that, even by young ladies, whom he designated "first-raters." I know not what he said to my fair invitresses, but certainly the invitation was no more repeated. I was seated one calm, lovely evening, half-buried in an alcove of flowering plants, and wholly buried in a dream of romance, when suddenly my reverie was disturbed by something which fell immediately at my feet. I thought, at first, perhaps it was a bat which had been wheeling its dull, circuitous flight above, it was so soft and light in its descent, but on picking it up I perceived that it was a satin slipper, embroidered with flowers and gold beads, from its size and symmetry belonging to one of the prettiest feet in the world. A glance from the slipper to the window transfixed me. There was a

beautiful, frightened young female, gazing down upon me as if in supplication for the offence of the fallen slipper. Imagine anything better, ye writers of melodrame!—it was the fair face of my charming incognita—the unknown lady of my love. It was her invitation, doubtless, which I had so abruptly declined! Are we not poor, blind mortals?—and who so blind as mortals in love? I did not speak; I really believe I was *frightened*. So was she, probably, for almost in an instant, while I stood looking confusedly at the form above me, “like the lightning,” it was gone. It might have been a delusion, but then I had in my hand the slipper. It was as palpable as the slipper of Cinderella, and as pretty, too. How a lady came to drop a slipper out of a chamber window, except by *design*, may seem singular; this slipper, in every sense of the word, however, was in the course of being embroidered on the instep with a rose, and I *presume* that the pretty embroideress having leaned somewhat too

forward from the window for the advantage of the evening light, had met with the accident in question; how else could such an accident have possibly occurred? But how was this pretty slipper to be restored? Should I send it in by the servant?—should I send it by my brother?—*ought* I return it myself?—*dared* I?—had I the courage? Like Master Slender, I was afraid I had *not*.

I might have written a sonnet. What an opportunity! I invariably lost such opportunities. Sonnet on restoring a lady's slipper. But I wrote *no* sonnet, and after asking my *mother*—for women are, especially in *such* cases, our best advisers—what I ought to do, she replied that I ought to knock at the lady's door with some very polite message, &c. I followed my mother's advice, but that so awkwardly and lamely, I am quite sure if the servant who opened the door to me had not been aware of who I was, she must have supposed from my agitation that I had come thither to steal

something out of the hall, if not to rob the house. The message I delivered was, I should say, inaudible; and the relief to my agitation on escaping from the door, such as those who have never been in a similar situation would find perfectly unimaginable.

A moment of retreat and reflection hastily restored my pitiable state of equilibrium, and my sanity. I reproached myself contemptuously for my ridiculous consternation at the open gate of my Eden. Dazzled by its radiance, I had not even listened to "the silver bells within." One conviction only consoled me. *She* knew that I had written some *rational* lines; that they had been published; therefore I did hope she might come to a more charitable conclusion than to write me down a fool; although I have since learned from tried experience to think that a man *may* be a poet and a fool at the same time—at all events so far as concerns his own interest in worldly matters.

I was heartily ashamed of myself, and made a thousand notable resolutions to recover, as speedily as possible, the opportunity I had lost, but how? She would assuredly despise, laugh at me! In this way I tormented my unhappy self, for days together, stealing frequently into the garden, under the friendly shadow of the laburnums and lilacs, to see if I could not gain another glance of my Peri, and lay hold of her wings, or catch another slipper in my arms: but my Peri had disappeared, I had frightened her away: she was gone! I became fretful, anxious, ill. My mother discovered, to her great sorrow, that "her poor *boy*" was in love, though with whom she could not guess, and only hoped it was not with some designing minx, who had waylaid his innocent heart, for at the age of *grown-up*, when I thought myself much more of a man than I do at present, my poor mother always spoke of me as a mere child, and called me "Boy" to the day of her death.

At length this young lady and I *did* meet : her name I discovered was Adelaide. —what a name for the mistress of a poet ; Adelaide, how germanic ! and our meeting equally romantic, not to be surpassed by Petrarch and his divine Laura, or Faust and the beautiful Margaret, or any of those first delicious interviews of lovers, described by the poets, either of ancient or modern days.

It was a still, summer evening, our little garden glittered all blossoms and perfume. It had been carefully put in order that day, and the gardener had planted in it a variety of new and beautiful flowers. I remember there were carnations of the most exquisite colours ; their bright vermillion hue, near the little side door, inserted in the walk, which the gardener had neglected to close, attracted me to enter that unusual way. I had been out nearly all the day rambling in the country. A light step in an adjoining covered walk, that is, covered by a few roses, induced me to turn

in a contrary direction, to surprise her—I thought to have surprised my mother. It was the young lady of the embroidered slipper; she neither drew back, blushed, nor started at the sight of me. I thought, for I had the courage to look in her face this time, that I almost detected a lurking smile at my awkwardness and embarrassment at this unlooked for interview. Perhaps I blushed, and I was very bashful; of course, one of us must speak to the other, the rule of the drama required that it should have been the gentleman; I am afraid, for the credit of chivalry, to confess almost, that it was the lady. There was something of a fallen rose, there was a something of an awkward running a thorn into one's own finger, in picking the rose up and holding it in one's own hand, of suddenly recollecting that the same rose belonged to the lady, and presenting it, and hearing indistinctly the words "Thank you, *sir*,—[—]"

Here the gentle speaker stopped, the pause ought to have been filled up by

another voice. It was, by that of my mother, who suddenly emerged from another part of the garden, with a bouquet which she had been selecting for the purpose of presenting it herself to her fair guest, whom she had almost accidentally invited in, at the open garden gate, to look at the new carnations.

“Ah! this is my *boy!*” laughed my mother, by way of introduction, although at that period, be it known, I was full five feet eleven; and the young lady made a curtsy, still smiling, as she *could* smile, while her merry blue eyes glanced, as Wombell would have said, from the crown of my head to the tip of my heel. I believe I had the courage to present my mother’s bouquet, with a few words, and the ice once broken, I could give as good an account of myself as any other individual of my species. The young lady did not refer to the adventure of the slipper, nor did she display any sort of emotion, whereby I might have hoped that I had made some

sort of an impression. My vanity was a little piqued at this, and I do not believe that the impression of our first interview was by any means so satisfactory, as the rainbow dreams of fancy had promised. I was almost sorry to find my exquisite ideal, only a mortal after all; it was something like the feeling, after having seen Carlotta Grisi balancing herself on a sunflower, to seeing her seated in an arm-chair, like any other human being. In the disturbed slumbers of that night, many a sweet delusion, however, stole over me; in which the object of my admiration hovered before me in a fairy form, and the music of her voice fell like the holy harmony of distant sabbath bells upon my ear. This was but a foretaste of that mitigating voice which was to exist for me as a charm, as it did through many unlooked for anxieties, cares, and sorrows.

But I must proceed with my narrative, which, though partaking greatly of romance, will still prove itself to be a not over-

wrought picture of real life, and circumstances, as they actually seemed, in the midst of the busy stirring world, where truth but too frequently indeed assumes an exterior, how much more strange than fiction.

From the period of our first interview, as our families became more and more intimately acquainted, I had more and more opportunities of witnessing the development of the many rare woman's qualities which my future wife possessed, to say nothing of her good looks, and they were very good; she had received a first rate education, her mind was endowed with a pure taste, and, although she could not, perhaps, have written one line of poetry, or have twisted a sentence in a drama, she had all the capability of *judging* with an unerring opinion between merit and the contrary. As a pianist her performance was perfect for a private gentlewoman,* her

* Her instructor had been the elder Parnel, whose lessons were always given on the violin. How much light

singing equally so. Nothing could have surpassed her ballad singing, natural, and so full of feeling.

How she came to form an equal attachment to one so uncouth, comparatively speaking, as myself, is a matter which I could never clearly understand; yet, that she did so, and most devotedly, the sequel of this narrative will go far enough amply to prove, and I dread to think, far to prove also, that her health, if not her *life*, was seriously endangered, *if not sacrificed*, by the too nervous excitement which she permitted to overcome her delicate feelings, in her unceasing anxiety for me, through the various trials of my chequered life.

Not to dwell too long upon common-place circumstances, in a word we were married at the Cathedral Church, Norwich—the happiest of brides and bridegrooms—posted

did she not cast over my dull taste for music, which I found so beneficial to me in after years, when I became to be acquainted with such men as Hawes, Bishop, Balfe, Wallace, Rodwell, Rees, Loder, and all the rest of the Harmonious Choir.

off for Yarmouth, my brother riding on horseback—remember he was a sailor—before us, and setting the bells ringing at every town or village he went through, to our cost, though of that we thought nothing, being, as Buckstone says, “too joyous for anything.” I only recollect that one untoward circumstance occurred to us all the journey, and that was, my brother’s horse stooping suddenly to drink, as he was passing a stream, capsised him over the bows, as he phrased it, and sluiced his top rigging. However, as his top rigging was not damaged, at least by the fall, he was by no means offended at our laughing heartily at his misfortune, which was related with double zest at the dinner table at the Wrestler’s Inn.

Oh, happy days of honeymoon ! why, like the delicious extract from which you derive your name, melt ye so speedily away ? or transform the sweet to acid, which should last for ever. Would it were otherwise, then, indeed, were this fair earth, which some men call unsightly, at least a *human*

Paradise, and human feelings nearly allied to those of angels. But it is now clearly comprehensible to my mind, that these things are not permitted us to a great, good end. Should we not be too content else in this world, which is evidently only a state of probation, a great desert, to some happy land where we are to meet again inseparable, in a pure and perfect bliss, as the interruptions which are unceasingly thrown in upon mortal happiness sufficiently tend to suggest, meet happiness where and under whatever form you may. Misfortune, therefore, becomes—oh is it not consoling—our strongest hope, our brightest promise of “another and a better world” And so it is; the Almighty works His wondrous marvels through man’s short-sightedness, and the bereavement we oft too bitterly complain of, is mercifully no doubt that which eventually brings about our future redemption, our eternal weal.

CHAPTER V.

THE first piece of folly that I was guilty of, sometime after my marriage, was to set up a printing office of my own, in the market place in Norwich, and *attempt* to establish a magazine. This speculation failed altogether ; I received little or no encouragement, and, although I had many contributors, whose works were well worthy of public attention, Norwich was not the place, and it was quite evident that I did not fully understand the taste of the Norwich people, at least, so far as publishing a magazine went, because I should be unjust to say that they did not appreciate my little talent, under another form, viz., under a dramatic form.

I cannot call to mind whether it was before or after my marriage, that I wrote a

Edwin.

tragedy called "Edwin." It was founded on the late Miss Edgeworth's popular novel of the Scottish Chiefs: it was produced at Norwich, and my old acquaintance, Frederick Vining played "Edwin," the hero of my piece; it was quite satisfactory to me, that he did not recognize in its author, the young rustic hero of Bury St. Edmund's. But I recall to memory here, that one of the first productions of mine, on any stage, must have been an address written and introduced into a well known piece, "The Naval Pillar," and spoken with immense applause, by Mrs. W. Clifford, (late of the Haymarket Theatre,) in the character of Britannia.* "Edwin," however, was my first play, it was a serious undertaking at all events, five acts. It was George Coleman,

* I pause here, to pay a small tribute to this excellent actress, (the mother-in-law of Mr. W. Harrison, our great English tenor, of whom I shall have much to say in my second volume,) she played for me in a tragedy which I also perpetrated in Norwich, called *Antigone*: she was the *Antigone*. In a few years after she played for me in London, Mariette in the *Floating Beacon*, and Wardock Kennilson, at the Surry Theatre, in the melo-drama of that

I think, who observed that he could imagine nothing more awful than Act 1, Scene 1; but in the outset of life, it is astonishing how we gallop over difficulties. I shall say little of my second *tragedy* of "Edwin," except that it was represented several consecutive nights, a thing very unusual in the country, or rather out of London, and that it was received with much greater favour than my magazine, which, after two or three numbers, had descended most quietly to the tomb of all the Capulets, and no questions asked, "no reckoning made, but sent to its account, with all its imperfections on its head."*

name, both with equal success. She was the best queen in Hamlet, I ever beheld, and still equally great in Mrs. Candor; her elocutionary power perfect, and at the same time a wit. Being once in a gipsy party in Lord ——— Park in Norfolk, with her and about twenty others, there was an elderly *Miss* of fifty, who wished to be mistaken for fifteen, I called her a rose, a *priamrose* was Mrs. Clifford's sly retort.

* It was satirically said of me by a sly old critic, even in this early stage of practice, that I displayed a precosity of tact by leaving one person living at the end of my tragedies, to give out the play for the ensuing night.

Bertha. I afterwards produced, in the Theatre Royal Norwich, my *third* tragedy, "Bertha," Bertha, by the celebrated Miss Norton, an excellent actress. I am not supplied with bills nor dates to tell in what succession these pieces followed, nor do I think it of the slightest importance to futurity. I am sure many of my readers will be only too much surprised at my audacity, in ever having attempted to produce a *tragedy* at any time, under any form. My next *perpetration* threw me more into my own level, "The Russian Boy," a melodrama founded on Mrs. Opie's interesting tale. It was quite a hit, thanks to Mrs. Opie's name and celebrity, and was played with equal success round the circuit. Frederick Vining (again,) the Russian Boy. Tom Dibdin also wrote a piece on this subject.

The Russian Boy.

I remember this little drama with the more especial pleasure, as it introduced me to the notice of Mrs. Opie. I was one

evening at a concert, at the then New Concert Room, when she came in. Every eye turned towards her; she was worshipped in society, not only for her great talent and her polished manners, but for her peculiar beauty, which could not fail to strike even a stranger. She always reminded me of a lovely Bacchant, it was so voluptuous, yet so delicate and feminine, especially when she sang, which she did, sweetly, and accompanied herself mostly with the pedal part. Her singing the lines on the death of Sir John Moore was affecting to the last degree. Judge of my confusion, when, in an instant, I saw her eye directed through her glass at me. It was quite evident she knew me, as she was making her way towards the place I occupied, and eventually sat herself down, almost by my side. The first act of the concert ended: she spoke to me.

“Mr. Ball, I think?”

“That is my name madam, at your service,” of course with an awkward attempt

at a profound bow, and a little confusion, struggling to seem otherwise.

“ You are the author of the new melodrama, forthcoming to-morrow evening, ‘ The Ruffian Boy,’ I understand.”

As this enquiry was made, as I imagined, in rather a displeased tone, I was almost afraid to acknowledge myself, and no doubt, rather coloured than replied, which she observing, promptly continued, “ I wish you all possible success,” then *very* abruptly, “ I shall not go and see it ”

“ I am sorry,” I replied timidly, though with some adroitness, “ if, by selecting that interesting subject, I have offended her whom it was my strongest desire to please.”

Softening, and blushing in her turn, “ Offended !” she reiterated, “ Oh no, I am so far from being offended, that I shall send several of my friends to witness its representation, and as I am assured that you have already displayed a remarkable dramatic skill in your previous productions,

I have no doubt but your drama will be very successful."

Here the second part of the concert commenced. At the conclusion, Mrs. Opie's carriage being announced, with a graceful courtesy and an amiable smile, she withdrew.

"The Ruffian Boy" was produced with an unusual *éclat*, and Mrs. Opie, being with a large party of gentry in the stage box, was amongst the first to witness and applaud its performance. One of the most decided points in this drama was a part played by a Mr. Williams as a mad boy, in which he sang snatches of wild songs with a thrilling effect. Vining, also, was inimitable, and Miss Norton. Such a piece now produced in London, *so played*, would run one hundred nights at least, although it contained neither a lottery, nor blue fire for a finale.

It must have been about this time, before or after, that I forwarded a melodrame to the Surrey Theatre, called "Edda." Tom Dibdin was the manager. It was accepted,

and played many nights. *The Miss Taylor* played Edda. There is nothing like her acting now remaining on the stage. Dibdin speaks of this piece in his memoirs, and I must in my turn step a little out of my path to do a something of grateful justice to the memory of my dear, kind old friend, Tom Dibdin. For ever involved in pecuniary troubles, it was almost impossible to tell what his true character would have been had his circumstances been different. He was a manager and an author, as every one knows. In his management he was kind-hearted—in his authorship void of selfishness or envy; and although he wrote well himself, and with an extraordinary facility, it by no means deterred him from appreciating and bringing forward the *works* of *others*, as I, who was an entire stranger, owed to him my first introduction to a London audience, have an undoubted right to assert. “Fazio” was also a work whose merits it was his tact to discover; and he did not, as some who succeeded him

in management would have done, substitute his own name for the real author's, and by altering lines, and giving a garbled sense to the original, *make it his own*. But I always thought the public more to blame in these respects than the Midasses who usurped the dignity too oft beyond their decently assuming. In other countries they would be differently requited.

I came to London with my wife to attend rehearsals, and see the representation of *Edda*. I shall never forget how astonished I was at the vast size of the theatre. I seemed to tread on air; there was an enchantment about it all, more than earthly. The kind, enlightened, facetious manager; the amiable manageress; the performers—I thought them scarcely inferior to demi-gods; the beautiful scenery; the exciting rehearsals! How enchanting!—what a delusion!

One thing struck me as strange—Bengough and Clifford disputed about a phrase in the drama. One said it should

be the "mounting sun," the other the "mountain sun," yet neither referred to me, the author. "How is this?" I inquired aside of Mr. Dibdin. "My dear lad," was Dibdin's facetious reply, "each is afraid that you should set him right." I also produced in Norwich my tragedy of "Antigone." The part of Antigone by Mrs. William Clifford.

In the meantime, business, and the printing office, under the direction of a superintendent, went on but indifferently: Not unlike the farm when I left it in the hands and superintendence of my brother, who could never make it "ship-shape," he said. I will not dilate upon this. My partial success in town as a dramatist had led me astray to reckon upon a far more agreeable life in London. It was my own wish to attempt it; it was my wife's also, because it was mine; and the success of another melodrame, "The Inkeeper of Abbeville," in Norwich, made up *our* resolution.

Mrs. Opie, too, advised me to this step;

her last injunction to me was, "bear and forbear," and to show how kind and considerate she was to me, as she was to everybody alike, I insert here part of a letter, in which she gives me some good advice:—

" Letters of business cannot be too short.
 " I meant to write to you to tell you that I
 " *hope* you will drink tea with us some
 " afternoon, *soon*. I will send and fix the
 " day. I fear it cannot be *this* week. On
 " Thursday I go to the Palace again ; but,
 " *nous verons*—good night.

" Much yours,

" AMELIA OPIE.

" Edward Ball, Esq."

Miss Macaulay, also, who came down to give her celebrated monodrame at the Theatre, and for whom, at Mrs. Opie's request, I wrote a recitable poem, in humble imitation of Lord Ullin's Daughter—led me to believe that fortune and fame, both, awaited me on the metropolitan boards. This lady was a most singular and extraor-

dinary woman, of great talent, but she imagined herself certainly not less than Mrs. Siddons. Her recitations were perfection—especially her lyric recitation of “Lord Ullin’s Daughter.” Of all the numerous entertainments now going, there is no one superior or equal to Miss Macaulay’s. As an actress, she wanted point, however, and the presence of mind to fill up the character when silent. There was something strange and wild in her conception of every part. Some people imagined that her mind was a little astray at times, and told singular stories of the way in which she had occasionally addressed the audience. Her voice somewhat resembled Rachel’s, and her school was of that kind; but she could also play comedy, and sing comic songs with an especial humour. I was told, as a *monstrosity*, by a lady, that she, (Miss Macaulay,) had once enacted the part of Yarico with naked feet. I can scarcely stretch even my point of imagination so far

as to fancy Yarico with naked feet, but I find it still more difficult to fancy her feet thrust into a pair of tight white satin slippers, which is not uncommon, and which I have seen. Poor Miss Macaulay's attempt to improve the taste of the time was looked upon as deserving little less than a straight jacket. Yet this, absurd as it was, was surely not quite so inconsistent as Garrick playing Macbeth in a gold-laced coat and a bob wig.*

Venafra, I think it was, came over to this country with beautiful French dancers—ladies. So well as I can recollect, it was during the management of Mr. Charles Kemble, and Captain Forbes, and Mr. Moore; *real* managers—men who had money to speculate with, and paid their

* I remember the first time I saw naked feet represented, (in silk fleshings, of course,) was in a Greek tragedy, "Orestes," at Covent Garden Theatre, and many people disliked the appearance, although it should have reminded them of some of the finest statues in the world; but English taste was very squeamish, even twenty years ago.

losses in those speculations, and who did not shut up the theatre when they had a bad *week*, and call it the end of a *season*. Well, touching these French lady dancers. Silk tights, as they are theatrically called, were then only tolerated at *His Majesty's Theatre*, in the Haymarket: It was then only permitted the aristocracy to be, as old Mrs. Bull called it, *undelicate*. Would it be believed by some of our juveniles, these French ladies were nearly expelled the stage for the very same cause which now sets the theatre in a roar of approbation, and brings down a shower of camellias, azalias, japonicas, and even blushing English roses to their *feet*. See what an enlightened race we have become, thanks to foreigners, whose habits and manners we once so repelled, and who were the first to teach us the "poetry of action."

But I transgress; we had not yet taken leave of the dear, old-fashioned city of Norwich. Partings of all kinds bring back

floods of sad memories, and, therefore, should always be as briefly got over as possible. When it comes to a separation from any one, or anything that time or circumstances have at all attached to us, how the bad will evaporate and the good expand. Doubts, fears, self-reproaches, will arise in spite of ourselves, both as regards the past, and the dark, uncertain future. Remembered benefits, and the esteem of kind hearts lost, glow before us in a new light, and we feel, with a just appreciation, for the first time, how much we are about to leave behind us, all that we loved—oh ! how much better than we ever believed we loved ; and that we ought to have loved yet still how much more !

Farewell then, beloved old Norwich, scene of many a happy triumph, not the less delightful because half imagined. Farewell to your antique castles and turrets, your green Bracondale Hills, your caverns and your silver winding river. Long may those

green and golden hills, those old oak groves, and those daisied banks so beautiful, continue to be frequented by hearts, beating lightly as mine has beaten there, and if such be permitted, I can invoke upon you no greater blessing.

Previously to our quitting Norwich, my brother had, after my marriage, quitted it also, and went to reside in a little cottage at Ixworth, near Bury St. Edmunds, we staid with him and my mother a few days only, and then proceeded on our journey of fame and fortune, (the vain delusion of too many,) to London. I cannot exactly say whether it was on this occasion, or some previous one, that we paid a visit to Barton Hall, the seat of Sir Charles Bunbury; and I simply mention it to shew the high appreciation which this family invariably bestowed upon talent, even of the humblest description : surely it was a mark of distinction to have been invited thither, by Sir Charles himself, as a poet, on whom he wished to

confer the most *solid* commendation, and let me tell you, this, from the friend and patron of Doctor Goldsmith and Mrs. Inchbald, was no mean honour to descend on a head like mine. Excellent Lady Bunbury too, I shall never forget her graciousness, both to myself and my wife, and how she spoke of my dear mother, and of the Rev. Mr. Marker, my mother's first husband, who had been Sir Charles' private chaplain, in the days when Goldsmith was an inmate of the hall. I have often heard my mother speak of Goldsmith, of his pompadour coat, and of his eccentricities. We saw on this occasion, the celebrated horse, which won Sir Charles so many thousands. I hope the jockey club will not quarrel with me for not, at this moment, recollecting its name, *perhaps* it was Smolensko. Lady Bunbury, once so lovely, as report and her portrait in the drawing-room bespeak, was now a martyr to the rheumatism, and quite incapable of rising from her chair. So it is, the truly good are sometimes to be the most afflicted.

We must not, as Christians, question why, we can only bend in submission to the Great Disposer of all things, submit and be silent. It is our duty and the best and wisest.*

* Of this excellent lady, the story (told me by my mother,) is very interesting, notwithstanding her rheumatism, she had been a perfect heroine of romance. Her innocent village beauty, when a child, particularly attracted the notice of Lady Sarah Bunbury, (Sir Charles' first wife), her name was Cocksedge, I think. Lady Sarah not only received, but generously educated her like a gentlewoman, and when the former deserted the hall and her husband, to share the fortunes of another, in every respect far inferior to the man she had forsaken, she took Miss Cocksedge with her, but they had not proceeded far in the carriage, when, as if suddenly touched with remorse or compassion for her excellent husband, she observed with emotion, that he would be very lonely in her absence, and, ordering the carriage to be stopped, she requested Miss Cocksedge to alight and return to Sir Charles, and confer on him every kind attention. Miss Cocksedge did as she was requested, and afterwards became Lady Bunbury, in the place of her not unkind-hearted benefactress, the best of wives, as she was one of the best of women, and, the deserved, future happiness of Sir Charles was fully confirmed by the true affection of this most excellent lady.

CHAPTER VI.

LONDON is at length before us; London, mighty incomprehensible London, which rises out of its dim smoke, like a vast Babylon, under the potent incantation of some dark wizard's wand. St. Paul's, the Monument, and Westminster Abbey seeming to point as you approach them, (by the coach) the first features of an indefinable outline. A ride up Whitechapel, in those days, had in it nothing to inspire bright imagery in the dreary mind of a young poetical visionary.

I had met with great losses in business, probably, had I neglected business less, I *might* have been more successful; *mais*, as the French have it, I could not make myself

what I was *not*, I could not divest my heart of feelings, which hurried me on like a steam engine, to my *destiny*. I listened to the cautious advice of the worldly-minded, and resolved to take it, but I could not. Miss Kelly, *the* Fanny Kelly, once told me that the smell of the stage lamps quite upset her reason for all rational advice opposed to stage-like things ; I can both understand and believe it ; one is born with certain notions and ideas, and how can we fly from ourselves, as Sir Walter Scott said " Put the kettle on the fire, and bid it not boil." We see nothing of the chequered road before us, we see only the rose leaves with which young fancy strews and covers it, and the more we hear of the hidden serpents under our rose leaves, the more we disbelieve, and wish to tempt the dangerous and mysterious peril. It is well it is so, perhaps, or the world would be all one colour, one taste, one propensity. There is a certain spell, as it were, for ever operating, like the odour of the stage

lamps, as Miss Kelly observed, upon the mind towards which the mind itself is fated like the sunflower to turn. As the phrenologists have it, if our bumps are so very different, how is it possible our thoughts or ideas should be the same. I believe that man is a *free* and *independent* agent, so far as right and wrong is concerned, but I almost begin to think, from the moment of our creation, that we are constitutioned to a certain inclination in life, as the willow is to bend over a stream, and I much doubt, provided that inclination be not a vicious one, however many difficulties and much sorrow it may have brought upon us, whether it be not, in the end, the happiest course we could possibly have pursued. Therefore, let us not be too unhappy, let us not imagine that we could have done better, we are neither our own keepers, nor our own agents, and if the result be not exactly what the more sunny outset led us to expect, it is consoling, at least to remember

that the man who, through reverse of circumstances, retains a clear conscience, retains at least *one* invaluable jewel which no one can tear from him, not even fate. The astronomer would almost want bread ere he would cease to reckon the stars. The mariner would prefer to face death, rather than forego the sublimity of the deep; the traveller, who has endured every mortal suffering under heaven, will return eagerly to the scene of his peril, even when he might enjoy every comfort and tranquillity in his native land. Ask any one of those men if his time were to come over again, notwithstanding the various difficulties, the excitement and misfortunes by which he was hunted, and a thousand times well nigh devoured, whether he would forego the same course, for a life of ease and independence? He will answer you, *no*, and tell you that *his was the* independence, the independence of ambition, enterprise, or of the heart's gratification, which gold could neither purchase nor pay

for.* Therefore your actor, with his scanty paltot, and your author, with his fresh half quire under his arm, are neither of them, after all, so much to be pitied, as those capon lined worthies, who nearly ride over them in their blazoned carriages, imagine ; I much question whether either the one or the other would exchange notions or positions for the possession of the Mogul Empire. So according to Doctor Panglos, it is clearly *all for the best*, which I think should be a lesson to parents, not to thwart so much the inherent inclinations or propensities of their children, but to find out the surest means of turning them to good account. Every poor man has it not in his power to do much towards promoting the intellect of his progeny, but in this age of *liberal* education, much is to be done, and the mind once properly set going, will do marvels, in its *own way*, for itself. We

* But what is it my friend Sheridan Knowles has to say in such superior language, on this subject, respecting the old mariner who forswears the deep and its boisterous murmurs, yet builds his cabin within the sound of its waves.

have seen that in so many remarkable instances of genius, that it requires little or no illustrating, yet I must be allowed to record one instance. I knew a lad, the son of a very humble bookbinder in Norwich, who displayed a great precosity in the acquirement of languages, and frequently, when he ought to have been sewing the books for a maintenance, his father has found him over the foldless press, trying to make himself acquainted with some certain stray pages of the Latin Grammar. What was to be done? It was a *propensity*, a laudable one. But they were poor people, and on the daily, nay, hourly earnings of this son, much depended for the support of their little family. These good parents, however, did not beat their son, they did not even chide him, but they mourned secretly over the hopelessness of his disposition to *learn*, because they wanted the means to carry his inclinations into execution, as the merits of the case deserved, while they felt that it would induce him to

neglect, if not despise, his more humble but certain calling. At length, however, the mother, (women are always the first in domestic enterprise,) made an application to one or two worthy people, who shook their heads, but nevertheless subscribed to render assistance. The son was sent to a good school; the father toiled with double diligence, to supply his place at the binding press.

The effort succeeded to admiration. The lad, thrown into the current of his own disposition, became rapidly a fine classic scholar, and in a few years taught as head master in one of the first seminaries in the kingdom. He is now the Rev. Doctor ———, and his erudite and splendid works are before the public, both for their instruction and admiration.

At the recommendation of my friend Mrs. Opie, I did not make an attempt to sustain myself by literature, or the drama, but, with a letter of introduction written by herself, took a position in one of the

first printing offices in London. My stay there was very brief, not from any distaste, either on my part, or the part of my employers, who treated me with the greatest respect and deference, but a little bit of destiny, what else shall I call it, followed me, even into this place. A Mr. Payne, who had formerly gone down to Norwich to "star it"—as the London theatricals term playing in the country—during his stay in the theatre, saw my melo-drama of "The Innkeeper of Abbeville," in rehearsal; he had seen me on the stage, and coming accidentally into this printing office, recognised me with some surprise, so much so, that he approached, with an apology for addressing me. Of him I had not the slightest knowledge or recollection, but we speedily became acquainted, I remembered having seen him enact the part of Hamlet.

He enquired flatteringly, how it happened, with my abilities as a dramatist, that I *condescended* to accept a situation of

any kind, when I might be my own master, and live as a gentleman. My answer was, that I knew no manager, except Mr. Dibdin, and he had then quitted the management of a theatre.

"You require no introduction," was the prompt reply, "send your piece which I saw, "The Innkeeper of Abbeville," to the Surrey, Watkins Burroughs is too good a judge not to bring it out, *directly*." I thanked this stranger and did as he requested me. Watkins Burroughs did bring out the piece, it made a hit, ran upwards of a hundred consecutive nights; but by no chance did I ever see this Mr. Payne again, nor could I hear of him, despite every enquiry.

From the production of this drama, "The Innkeeper of Abbeville," I date my reign of scenes and vicissitudes, as a dramatic author, for it was, really, honestly speaking and without affectation, puffing or claquers, truly successful, and has since been played in every theatre in the united

kingdom, is playing now, and also in America with equal effect. Bengough, Sam Chapman, and Miss Huddart, since the queen of the stage, Mrs. Warner (died Sep., 1854) played in it, and all exquisitely well; Sam Chapman made the part of Ozzrand peculiarly his own. Cooke, (not T. P.) from over zeal, nearly upset me on the first night, by rushing on as Dyrkille, and saying that he had left the murdered count in a *dish* instead of a *ditch** This, however, was no greater blunder than is made still, in *Troilus and Cressida*, where they speak of a fruit in an "unwholesome *dish*." Surely Shakspeare wrote *ditch*. I know in the orchard at Burwell, we had a splendid pear tree which hung over what they called an unwholesome *ditch*, and many a longing

* *Dyrkille*. "Why man, the stranger's dead, as we have thrown him into that *ditch*, and covered him over with branches, &c"—*Innkeeper of Abbeville*. Act 2. Scene 2.

Had he made this mistake in "*Troilus and Cressida*," it would have been correcting an error to the same tune.

"Like a ripe fruit in an unwholesome dish,"
Should be—in an unwholesome *ditch*.

eye have I cast into the dingy mud, at the fallen luscious yellow pears, which lay there untouched and untasted, except by the marauding wasps, to which nothing is unwholesome.

I wish, here, to give a little dissertation on the difference of the theatres and the drama at the period when I commenced writing and now. What a change has come over our present free-trade sort of stage. In fact, it is just the difference between *something* and *nothing*. We had then a stage ; now we have not. The reason is obvious—there were then certain people for certain things, and certain theatres for certain performances : everyone had a chance. Now they seem always on the look-out to snap up each others ideas, to eat up each others thoughts. I sometimes think that the drama must remain in a needy, uncertain state, till every theatre be licensed by the Lord Chamberlain to a certain style of performance. Here tragedy, there comedy ; here melodrama, there opera ; here water,

there horses. Then we should have a school for each individual talent, and many different sets and sorts of performers would necessarily be employed and paid; as the public *must* then go to certain theatres to see a certain thing. Instead of opera, farce, and horses, in a spectacle, at one house, let each belong to its own cast, by which regulation every manager would have a chance of encouragement according to his merits, and the peculiarity of his performance. Legitimacy never seems to me at its ease except at Old Drury or Covent Garden, or, rather, what in my early days, was Covent Garden. When the old English Covent Garden was let to Italians, for Grand Italian Opera, they made such a transformation of it, that Charles Kemble, coming on the stage, just after the alterations were finished for the new Italian Opera, exclaimed—"But we let you Covent Garden Theatre—what the devil have you done with it?" While another, a great

man, looked silently, mournfully around, and *wept*

This fine second Italian Opera, exquisite as it is, having so much merit to recommend it, and those execrable casinos, and low, shilling concerts, none of them existed when I first began to write, consequently the English drama was in a far more healthy and demandable state. Translations were not so much relished by English taste, perhaps not so well done as now.

I by no means object to the import of foreign abilities. A clear deck and fair fight is, and ever will be my motto. But favour should be equal on both sides, which is *not* the case. The highest people, I regret deeply to say, the aristocracy especially, give little encouragement to their own. No national impulse brings them to our theatres, and while that is the case, we can expect no *rising* native talent. Genius which presents itself under the barbarous names of Brown, Green, or Smith, be it ever so violet-like,

is left to pine under the nettles at the corner of the garden of misfortune, while the exotic, under whatever name it assume, is carefully traïled, pampered, hot-housed, and nurtured with gold dust. This, to say the least of it, is *impolitic*, even on the part of the legislature, which affects to treat, with a smile of contempt the English drama and its supporters, or adjuncts. But let me be bold enough to assert that there never was, yet, a great nation without a great national theatre, where fine and noble sentiments, and moral lessons, better relished by the million, than those more severe ones promulgated from the altar itself, formed ever a people great and glorious—a method which they understood, and by which they best liked to be taught.

These remarks, written long since, have almost ceased to be applicable; at least, happily, only to the times in which they were written, for a great friend to native talent has risen, like a radiant star, since

then, above the horizon of the native drama, to encourage it by her golden smiles, in the person of our wise and gracious Queen, who is invariably the first to discover merit and encourage it. Her frequent visits to the theatres have done them the greatest good; everything on the stage is of late vastly improved—taste, elegance, refinement, and, though last, not least, morality.

I really feel, with a foresighted Frenchman, that the first symptom of a decaying nation is *the decline* of her *national MORAL drama*.

It was after the long run of Dibdin's uncommonly successful hit of "The Heart of Mid Lothian," so exquisitely produced, and so exquisitely acted in all its characters and departments, that Sir Walter Scott wrote his celebrated novel of Nigel, which I was called upon by Mr. Watkins Burroughs to dramatise for the Surrey Theatre. Dibdin could dramatise a novel in a day or two, I was compelled to take a week, and was the first to have my piece in rehearsal—another

version being underweigh for Covent Garden, by Pocock; his, however, was a drama in blank verse, which could not, of course, be hastily dismissed—mine a simple adaptation. Watkins Boroughs enacted the part of Nigel, Bengough the King, which on account of the Scotch dialect he was dreadfully afraid to undertake, and Buckingham was cast the part of the Miser. We had also Mrs. Glover's two daughters, both very young and very pretty, as Margaret Ramsay and Mrs Christie, one of them having never made her appearance on the stage. The scenery was painted by *the* Wilson as well as scenery could be painted.

The greatest confidence was placed in me by the manager. As young soldiers sometimes do at the outset of a campaign, I had shown a certain tact in my presence of mind, which quite struck and pleased him. It was during the last rehearsal of the Inkeeper of Abbeville; some one made the remark that it terminated tamely, and like a melodrama which was running at

another house. I immediately, on the stage, suggested the alteration as it is now played, and which proved both novel and effective. Nevertheless, Nigel was a far heavier, and a first piece. I trembled at my own responsibility. Getting up a three act piece, too, in those days was rendered a much more important affair than now ; or, at least, I thought so. Everybody concerned was deeply in earnest *then*. As the vast scenes were pushed into sets, imperfectly painted, and the different costumes and properties were brought in, piece by piece, on the arms of the tailor or tailoress, to be approved of by the manager, I could scarcely believe myself of sufficient importance to be the agitator of all this mighty commotion. Mrs. Glover, seeing my apprehension and nervous state, was afraid that I doubted the success of my play, and came kindly up to me with a cricket between her finger and thumb. "Look here," said she, with one of her sweet encouraging smiles, "I have just picked up this merry little

cricket on the stage, a *certain sign* of good luck wherever it is found. You'll be sure not only to succeed, but to make a decided hit." Bengough was not so sanguine, still afraid of the Scotch dialect; and poor Buckingham, so nervous with the Miser, he could come to no conclusion whatever, and would gladly have been transformed into the good-boding cricket itself.

June, 1822. The night arrived. The theatre crowded to suffocation—boxes, pit, and gallery. Sir Walter Scott's works were then not only the fashion, but the rage, and to see them in a dramatic form still more so. The enormous success of Mr. Dibdin's "Heart of Mid-Lothian," led many to suppose that any succeeding piece must prove a failure, especially in the hands of a young, inexperienced author. Fortunately, for me, they were mistaken. The cricket was successful.

I had the little private box R.H. the gallery, which remains there still; my dear wife was with me, more frightened than

alive. For me, I never suffered, with all my sensitiveness, when the curtain was *once up*. The great delusion which came over me, as beings which had floated so frequently before the imagination, crossed and recrossed my sight in apparent reality, lulled every fear to sleep, and I had hitherto in my brief career, been lucky enough to have received nothing but applause. The same and still greater success attended me in "The Fortunes of Nigel." Nothing ever went off more smoothly, or was received with greater favour.

Burroughs seemed formed for Nigel, Bengough surpassed himself in the King, and Buckingham, from an actor scarcely known, became so popular as the Miser, that frequently after, that one scene in which he was so truly great was given for him alone. Then there were the two young Miss Glovers, so youthful, so captivating, so all that could be desired, that they won every heart, not to forget a tribute due to the excellence of Miss Bence, who enacted

the grim Martha to the life ; she was a perfect picture for Sir Walter to have admired. The piece ran ninety-six consecutive nights, and brought in that time, when the price of admission was much higher, a vast sum of money. If these accounts should seem a little exaggerated, let the reader reflect that they are now written from memory only, and dictated by a mind which has ceased longer to regard even the vanity which excites enthusiasm, and that the author only wishes to record *facts*, simply and nearly as they occurred, for the amusement of readers.

As a melo-dramatic writer, with what was called "a *freshness of style*," I became at once popular. The papers spoke of me with the greatest indulgence ; and in the course of a few nights after the production of Nigel, I received a note from Mr. Egerton, then manager of Sadler's Wells Theatre, wishing me to write a part for Mrs. Egerton, and enclosing me an order for a private box, that I might go and see

her perform, which I did, Madge Wildfire in "The Heart of Mid Lothian," and a matchless piece of acting it was. I was enchanted. I had been brought up in the country, and had seen just such a woman as she made it ; that sly cunning which peeped through all her trouble, was so perfect, so crafty, yet so innocent—it is not to be described. The sunburnt face, the wild disposition of her attire, her mirth at entrapping her tormentor of the Tollbooth, and the tone of her voice in telling them they were "A pair o' the deevil's pets," contrasted with the wild, desolate broken-heartedness of "Oh Lord !" over the grave of her child, are fragrant memories, not speedily to pass away. She was a great, though a somewhat peculiar and constrained actress. Her Meg Merrilies was equal in its tone, I have been told by those who had seen Mrs. Siddons, to that lady's Lady Macbeth. And though, in latter years, I have seen Miss Cushman with all her merits, they were but leaves strewn on the grave of the other.

I felt myself not a little proud of having been already selected to write a part for an actress of so much talent as Mrs. Egerton ; and when I was introduced to her in her fantastic attire behind the scenes by her excellent husband, for there never was a more excellent one, the matted dishevelment of her long hair, the paint upon her face, the straw and wild flowers, in clusters, over her patched garments, I could scarcely believe myself speaking to a manageress, and I am afraid the *real* admiration I felt would have been far better expressed by language more artificial.

It was agreed that I should breakfast with them next morning, and decide, if possible, on some part which we should think most likely she would excel in. I had already made up *my* mind what that part should be, but I did not reveal my idea till I saw them again ; and, when I did see them again, I was almost too staggered in my opinion to do so.

My location was then in Upper Stamford

Street, Waterloo Road, which, at that time, was rather a rural place; a pond and large elm trees where the church now stands; the windows of my drawing-room commanding a clear view of the doors of the Cobourg Theatre—now one indefinable mass of intersecting streets. The distance was great; I was not very early at my appointment; besides, I did not very well know the way about London, and, on proceeding to Sadler's Wells, was more than once out of my latitude, (no omnibusses); however, I met with a hospitable welcome, late as I was, and made the best excuses I could, considering my astonishment at the sight of my heroine, whom I had supposed, the night previously, to be a young woman of about twenty-two. I found, instead, a middle-aged lady, seated at a table with spectacles on, darning a silk stocking. She noticed my surprise, understood it, and laughed most heartily.

I suggested the character I wished to write for her—it was *Joan of Arc*. It struck

both of them as being an excellent idea; terms were agreed upon, and I returned home to write.

The Egertons were trying people to work with; they would do and undo a hundred things in a scene; the lady in particular, was fastidious to an extreme degree, or nervous; not with a desire to torment or give trouble, for they were most excellent persons. I wish we had one or two such managers remaining. They had no pomposity!—no affectation!—no *fustian*!—no pretence! All they did or advised was from a sincere wish to advantage the author as well as themselves. I adhered to their advice, and, by so doing, generally brought them imperceptibly to my own opinions, and secured both their friendship, and our mutual success. There are many, I have no doubt, who will remember the production of “Joan of Arc,” and its magnificence at Sadler’s Wells, and its fine scenery by Greenwood. Poor Greenwood! he was what is called, in cockney parlance, a regular

“chaffer,” and liked a harmless piece of satire most amazingly. One morning while I was standing by him, admiring the progress of his work, he abruptly turned round and asked me whether I had ever heard of such an old fellow as Virgil, or his poetry? My unsophisticated reply was equally abrupt—

“Tityre tu patula recubans
Sub tegmine fagi——”

which seemed to take Greenwood so by surprise, that he nearly let the brush fall with which he was painting the scene. I never could define what this meant, but, as from that instant he became a most ardent friend, I imagined that I had made, *somehow*, one of those little hits in a circle of the heart which it has been my good fortune to make in the esteem of many very eccentric men in a very eccentric way, on many occasions. Perhaps, my accidentally knowing *something* of Virgil stopped Greenwood in some prompt reply. My mother used to tell a story of a lady who requested a young

dandy student to construe a phrase in Latin for her. Looking at the phrase, the young scholar shook his head. "I find it impossible to translate it," said he, affectedly twisting his moustache, "it is only dog's Latin, after all." "Dog's Latin," retorted the lady, "then it surprises me still more that a *puppy* should not understand his own language." If the scholar had been up in his part, this fine repartee would have been lost, which had been a pity.

"Joan of Arc" ran the rest of the season—120 nights—and was even afterwards removed to the Olympic, and played many nights more. Of Mrs. Egerton's acting the papers spoke in the highest terms. They could not honestly have done otherwise. The almost supernatural manner which she could assume, and did assume, both in Madge Wildfire and Meg Merrilies, told amazingly in Joan of Arc, and gave a romance, and almost an awful dignity to the character, which threw it out of the canvas beyond every other person on the

scene, in the most vivid and startling colours. Her upcast eyes, inspired, as it were, with unearthly light, seemed to commune with beings of another world, seen only by herself. Her tone of prophecy thrilled you, while her manner of discovering the king, gave you a belief that deception was an impossibility with a being endowed by heaven itself to bring to pass a great event. There was seldom a dry eye in the house when she uttered these words :

Joan. My father? Is he alive? Oh, now I am, indeed,
Conquered!—fallen! *Act 2, Scene 6.*

At this later period of my life, when I come to glance over the drama of “Joan of Arc,” and see how sketchy it is, I feel almost astonished that so much could possibly have been made out of so little. Campbell played the father with a fine truthfulness. Vale was a young soldier, and Keeley, *the Keeley*, was the comic hero, Valianto, the Pink of the Valley. I see this notice of him in the remarks to Cumberland’s edition of the drama: “Keeley, at that time an

obscure actor, (though how Keeley could ever have been an *obscure* actor, I cannot comprehend,) at Sadler's Wells, first exhibited his comic powers in the village braggadocio, Valianto." The editor must have meant to assert here that Keeley first made a decided feature in the part of Valianto, because, certainly, this was by no means his first appearance on the stage, nor in London. The part was very unworthy of him—I confess it; and this only tends to show that, place genius where you will, like the pure crystal stream, it will still flow on, ascend, and find at last its proper level. Keeley was always a fine actor, he never, from the first moment I knew or saw him, required any assistance but opportunity. I preferred him to Liston, even in Liston's days, in many points. There was less assumption—less of the actor—more left to natural development. But I feel that I tread upon dangerous ground. Keeley ranks now, deservedly so, too highly to require praise;

but it is encouraging to young beginners to see from what a slender root your *true* talent *will* spring up, and eventually hang its rich clusters on the roof top.

Thus far I had proceeded without a single dissentient voice. Very few dramatic writers, of my abilities, or in my platitude, had ever met with more decided success, confining, with all deference, the success to *minor* theatres; which, be it understood at the same time, were infinitely above the *majors* of after days. Thus far, I say, I had succeeded with *éclat*, when an incident happened worth recording, which led me, *at once*, to the Theatre Royal Covent Garden.

Mr. Charles Kemble came over to the Surrey to witness "The Fortunes of Nigel," previously to the bringing out of "The Crown Jewels," (by Pocock,) at his own theatre. It appeared that he was much struck with the Surrey piece; and, on coming down stairs, after its performance,

inquired of the doorkeeper the name of its author.

I was told this, and felt flattered ; but I felt much more so when I received a letter from Mr. Kemble, requesting me to call upon him at the theatre. The Theatre Royal Covent Garden ! Here was an event ! —an event of anxiety, perturbation, and anticipation, both for me and my dear wife. We saw nothing less than a pumpkin turned into a carriage, and mice into horses, in perspective ; and well for us it is, perhaps, that such delusions in this world do help us amazingly through it, but more especially in the hour of misfortune and reverse, as is often the case to all. Next morning I drew myself up to my utmost, although I was remarkably nervous. I would rather have faced any audience than a manager, at *any* time, and my sentiments are still, in that respect, unchanged — unchangeable. Then there was to enter by the stage-door of Covent Garden Theatre. Was I to knock, or ring ? I knew not.

Where it was I knew not. At length I discovered it was in Hart Street, and dreadfully did I require the *heart* to approach it. This was a more formidable ordeal than that of old, with Mr. Hindes, at Bury St. Edmund's, because I had now become conscious of my peril—been on the waves and felt the suffering. There is, (or *was*,) an old post opposite Covent Garden stage-door, in Hart Street; I am grateful to that post, for it sustained my tottering steps, when the flaunting actors, types of the world, “passed me by,” without so much as a look. How stately they appeared!—how high above myself; popping, some of them, in and out of carriages—others entering the theatre on foot, with a strut, as if the whole exchequer had been at the bottom of their boots. One carried a band-box, a white one, striped with blue; you might have sworn that it contained the Pitt diamond. Another a sword in a holland case; it must have been the property of the Emperor of Morocco. I knew not

whom to address; I addressed the *post*. The post said, or seemed to say, look at me, imitate me—keep your body straight and your head cool, and you'll do. I made the effort, advanced, and was in the hall. It was an uncommonly tall, gaunt man to whom I addressed myself, with an uncommonly red face—as he stepped forward, seeing I was a stranger, to receive, doubtless, any message or communication I had to make. There was a respectful kindness in his look, and all the Kemble-trained servants had *that* look, which gave me new nerve; so that, between my two newly acquired friends, the post outside the door, and the hall-porter inside, I mustered energy enough to cross *that* stage. But let me digress here a moment. Oh! for the pen of immortal Dickens to describe the crossing that stage, by a young, enthusiastic dramatist for the first time, on his way to the manager's room. Overland to India is nothing to it. All I had heard—all I had read of the Siddons, or the

Kemble, seemed to rush back into memory at once. And it was on these boards they had so often set their immortal feet! Miss O'Neil, too—Young! and how many more whose great names were sanctified in the deep recesses of my heart. It was to me like the interior of some solemn temple, into which, perhaps, I had been called to assist, and to mingle my footsteps with their footsteps, and to be one day honored and venerated as I honored and venerated them. Had I been told then how soon this temple would pass away, and scarcely one stone be left upon the other, and its ministers, too many of them desolate, what should I have replied? That it was madness to believe it. That the *constitutional* feeling of Englishmen would never allow it. That they would as soon permit the foreigner to desecrate St. Paul's, or Westminster Abbey, as to usurp their national theatres; and yet the foreigner has turned your national theatres inside out, and the philosophic John Bull cares just as much about it as does my

old friend the post at the stage-door, who sticks to one as well as to the other. At length I was in the presence of the most gracious manager that ever breathed—Mr. Charles Kemble. A handsome man he was, of noble bearing, and yet how affable, and his voice like music, the very first note of which made your heart bound, turn, listen, and admire.

A chair was placed for me, and when we were alone, for Farley, I think, was at first in the room. “You are the *highly successful* author of the drama of the ‘Fortunes of Nigel,’” were his bland words. Take a lesson *some* of *you* modern managers.

“I did the best my abilities admitted of, sir, and the public have been indulgent enough to receive my poor efforts with *great* favour,” was the reply.

“No one could have done it *better*,” said he, without seeming to have any wish to flatter.

I became a little confused, and I thought of my old friend the post. “You did me the

honour to go and see it, sir ; I am quite at a loss to thank you for so much condescension."

"No condescension in the least, Mr. Ball, you have nothing to thank me for ; it was a mere matter of business ; we are about to produce the same subject here, and I wished to see what they had done with it at the Surrey. I acknowledge to you, its author, who is so modest, that I was excessively pleased, not more with the acting and getting up, than with your part of the affair ; and I wrote to you to come hither, simply to say to you, that, if you like to direct your talents to our theatre, where, of course, we pay much better, that every attention shall be paid you. Have you anything at present ?"

"Thank you, sir ; no, nothing good enough. I will speedily write something, if you will indulge me by perusing it, when done."

"The sooner you set about it the better, and let us have it as speedily as possible."

When Mr. Faucett, the acting manager, came into the room, he had a startling look, and a scrutinizing eye, as if it tried you for a hidden crime, and wished to read your inmost thoughts through every part of your frame.

"This is Mr. Ball, the author of the many popular pieces, whom I have frequently spoken to you about," said Mr. Kemble.

"Ugh!" and a frown.

"I have expressed a desire that he should write for us."

"Let it be melodrama, then," was the snappish reply, or what I then thought snappish; but this was Faucett's manner, he really possessed a good heart.

"A melodrama of what kind?" I appealed to Mr. Kemble.

"Of what kind?" retorted Faucett. "Look into the papers, incidents enough *invented* there! The other day, a girl carried off by a savage fellow! Rock of Charbonnier."

"Oh!" I replied, "I have written on that subject, and sold it to Mr. Davadge, at the Cobourg."

"Hem! you should have brought it here. Savage fellow, T. P. Cooke! Girl carried off, Mrs. Vining! You're a ——— fool," I thought he had been about to add, but he ended by, "a quick writer, very quick writer."

"Well, however, bring us your next!" concluded Mr. Kemble.

I took my leave glad, at least, to escape the uncouth abruptness of the acting manager, and eager to fly home and report my bright prospects. It was very true that I had written a melo-drama on the subject of a savage man, as recorded in the *Times* paper, who had carried off a young lady from the house of her family, and concealed her somewhere amongst the rocks of Charbonnier. This piece I had sold to the manager, Mr. Davadge of the Cobourg Theatre, and it was already in rehearsal.

The following morning, during rehearsal at the Cobourg, I happened to tell Davadge

what had transpired between myself, Mr. C. Kemble, and Mr. Faucett, respecting the story of the Charbonnier. Davadge, who was a blunt man, a little in the Faucett school, was nevertheless of a very good disposition, immediately took the M.S. from the prompter, and handing it over to me, observed, "Your fortune is made; this is a *capital* piece, send it to Covent Garden, they will read, and bring it out in a style, so far exceeding anything we could possibly do, that I have not the slightest doubt of its making a most tremendous hit, and you can write for us another drama, on any subject you think proper." This was a very generous action, I forwarded my melodrama to Covent Garden; it was at once read and accepted.

I had an opportunity of returning this obligation, afterwards, to Davadge, by giving him my "Lord of the Isles," (with Rodwell's beautiful music,) by the production of which, Davadge told me himself, he cleared seven hundred pounds, which success

set him so upon his legs, that it led to a train of good fortune, whereby he died worth, at least, thirty thousand pounds.

Mr. Egerton, for whom I had written *Joan of Arc*, was not only manager at Sadler's Wells, but a leading actor at Covent Garden. He was delighted to hear of my introduction to the boards of *the Theatre Royal*, and came to compliment me accordingly, telling me at the same time, that Mr. George Coleman (the Younger, I think,) had expressed the highest opinion of my "*Father and Son ; or, the Rock of Charbonnier,*" and, in fact, had recommended it to the management, as one of the best written melo-dramas hitherto produced in this country. These are the words as told to me. Fancy this from a man like George Coleman. T. P. Cooke, George Bennet, Cooper, Durruset, Farley, Mrs. Vining, Miss Love, and *the* Mrs. Davenport, did their utmost to sustain the piece ; the scenery by the Grieves was exquisite ; every *practised* opinion in its favour, and

yet it *failed*, and was only acted five nights. So much for the exertion of combined talent ; so much for tried opinion ; so much for the public.

This was my first blow, and I felt it the more keenly, inasmuch as I had buoyed myself so much on the experience of others, that I had not in the least fortified myself for defeat. I sat in a private box ; my poor wife was with me as usual ; the first act went well enough, till it came to the part where Miss Love, as Amy, had to bring on the scarf of Violette, which is supposed to be spotted with blood. This blood-stained scarf seemed a signal for disapproval ; the crowded audience formed two distinct parties, however, for and against ; the interest of the story, which required the most silent attention, was marred in consequence, and the curtain fell to a perfect discord. It will be long ere I forget my sensations on that occasion, of my *first hiss*. It would form the subject of a sentimental ballad ; I felt exactly as if the flooring of the box

had suddenly given way beneath my feet, and was letting me down to an endless abyss. What can surpass the mortification of a condemned author? What can compensate for it? Nothing, in this life.

We got out of the theatre as well and unobserved as we could. I was hastening home along Bow Street, ashamed, blighted, amid a fancied shower of sibilations and hootings, when I heard a voice calling after me, in a very friendly tone: I was almost afraid to turn my head; when I did so, however, what could equal my astonishment at seeing the manager, Mr. Charles Kemble, at my elbow. He had enquired the way I had taken, and followed me from the theatre to console me. Was not he a manager! and taking me by the hand, conjured me, in the most amiable way, to keep up my spirits, as he felt assured, that another night it would go perfectly well! *Was not he a manager!*

The piece was repeated, another night, another, and another, but although it met

with less and less disapprobation, it never went without opposition and after the fifth night, at my own urgent request, it was withdrawn. Mrs. Davenport affirmed, and she was a shrewd woman, that there was a set made against it,—a clique, by persons whose interest it was to oppose any *new* author, especially one whose productions were likely to have a long run ; I believe that was the general opinion in the theatre. I had very strong reasons for believing this myself, as I gained experience afterwards ; and I am more confirmed in the idea, when I reflect that this same condemned piece has since been acted, with the greatest success, and is still acting, notwithstanding the lapse of years, before the most critical audiences, in almost every theatre in the world, where English is spoken. So much for the risks and vicissitudes of dramatic authors. The papers put another, and perhaps a more reasonable construction, on the unfavourable reception of this *Father and Son* ; they attributed its harsh treatment to the distaste

which then so powerfully prevailed against the introduction of decided melo-drama, on the boards of the legitimate drama, and spoke invariably well of it, as a *melo-drama*. After this I was immediately engaged to write the poetry of the *Zauberflöte*, for Covent Garden, which they could not eventually bring out, not being enabled to secure *Harley* for the part of Pappagino!! Hear this ye Italian warblers. I was handsomely paid, nevertheless. Mr. Kemble sent for me to communicate the bad news, as he called it, of their not being able to bring out the *Zauberflöte*. "However," he said, "I must make you some amends; we cannot afford much for this, as it proves a mischance, but will endeavour to recompense you better for something else, and, writing a cheque, he doubled it up and gave it to me: I thanked him and retired. On reaching the street, I looked at my cheque to see where it was payable, I thought it would be five, or perhaps ten, pounds: It was £70! Such was management, in

better, and I must say more honourable times.

Macfarren, also, dramatised the *Zauberflöte*, for the Surrey, and they brought it out with unusual splendour, but it did not succeed. It is a bad story, work it into whatever form you may. I have seen it since performed at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, *properly* put upon the stage, in the German, with Madame Schreuzder Devrient as the Princess Pamina; and also at the same theatre during Mr. Bunn's management, got up accurately, as regards music and superb mounting; but I doubt if it ever paid its expenses. Formerly the literary merits of a libretto were thought of very little consequence, but a happy change has come over the spirit of the dreams of composers, and the first inquiry of a manager is also now whether it be "*a good book.*" Our most popular operas are unquestionably excellent books, although Davison declares that Balfe could make an opera out of an

act of parliament. See "Robert the Devil," "Lucia di Lammermoor," "Norma," "The Bohemian Girl," "Somnambula," &c. Apropos of the "Somnambula," I think this not a bad opportunity for telling a little anecdote respecting the first appearance of that somniferous lady in this country. She first walked the plank at the Surrey, in Elliston's time: an author then of no great celebrity, and still less experience, had got hold of the French ballet, and put language to it. Elliston, finding it very dramatic—and Elliston was an excellent judge—resolved to bring it out at his theatre; but finding also a great want of tact displayed, even in the language—for stage language should always be, like its scenery, a little over-coloured—applied to me to give it here and there what he called a *touch up*. I was exceedingly reluctant to do this, inasmuch as it was the work of another author. It was, I considered, indelicate, and dangerous at the same time. "Then, by God, sir," said he, "if you do not un-

dertake it, the piece shall not be produced, and the author, (like most authors, *greatly* in want of means,) won't get his money. If you hang back for terms, sir," and Elliston putting on all his pomposity, "name your price, you shall find the money lying for you on the mantelpiece there, (pointing,) when you bring back the manuscript done."

Still, not relishing the employment, I named a considerable sum for so trifling a task. The manager instantly agreed to give it, and I promised the work next morning by eleven o'clock. I could have done it in half-an-hour; however, at the time appointed, I carried home the M.S. The manager, who was seated, like Cardinal Wolsey, in his chair of state, opened the leaves one after another. His eye brightened at every page; at length, at the scene where the Count goes out at the window, and where I had contrived to pop into his mouth a clap-trap, respecting what the man deserves who would be coward enough to take advantage of unprotected female inno-

cence, Elliston smiled one of his George-the-Fourth smiles, and exclaimed, rubbing his hands, exultingly,—“ That will do, sir, that will do ; now we *shall* bring them down !” Then, pointing with kingly dignity towards the mantelpiece, I found lying there, according to royal promise, the gold from the exchequer which was to requite me for my labour. Added to this, I had the pleasure of seeing how essentially I had, in the dark, served the author, who was truly deserving of the success which attended his piece. Poor fellow ! he is dead now ; and no one respects his memory more than myself. He imagined, I presume, that Elliston himself made the alterations.

At night, not the first, I went to see the *Sleeping Beauty*, whether she could *run* as well as *walk*. The author, who was there, came and sat next to me. His piece had been pronounced successful ;—he was, in consequence, a little grand, and when it came to my speech of the Count, (the clap-trap,) at the burst of approval with which

a Surrey audience, in particular, invariably greets a *virtuous* exclamation, he turned to me, with a gratified air, and said—"I think I had them there:" little dreaming of the kind treachery of the intention. And sincerely glad was I to be the slight prop to so worthy a fellow—and should have been had I not received a recompense for my, I hope, pardonable duplicity.

I must here relate a second anecdote of Elliston, although, I fancy, it has already been told, doubtless better, by gifted Pierce Egan, the celebrated author of "Life in London." I was one morning proceeding in the direction of the Surrey Theatre, when I met Elliston opposite the Riding School. He had a lofty, but a gracious way of stopping and speaking to you. It was always condescending, but never humiliating; although it was necessary to understand him.

"So, sir," he commenced, "concocting, eh? Something imaginative floating in the air, eh? Why not write for the Surrey

Theatre, eh?" This happened at a time when I had ceased to write for that side of the water, being more fully employed, and better paid, at the other legitimate theatres. "Have you anything would suit us?—*good enough* for us, eh?" As if I had never written there, or as if his own theatre ranked higher than all others, not only in London, but in the world.

"I have a melodrame," I answered, "called 'The Inchcape Bell!'"

"Ah! 'The Inchcape Bell!—good! Come and read it to me: you *may* to-morrow morning; and, let me see—ah! ten; be punctual." I promised obedience, and I invariably *now* kept my time. It is an admirable custom; I wish it were a little more practised, especially by theatrical people—and *more* especially those who should set the example.

Elliston was again enthroned in his chair of state, but looking unusually dull and drowsy, I thought. However, I commenced—

Act I.—Scene I.

Exterior of an old-fashioned Public House on the sea coast, inscription over the door 'The Inchcape Bell.' An ancient Castle on distant cliff, &c.

Chorus—

Elliston nodded his head ; it was not like a token of assent, or approbation ; however, I continued to read—

Chorus of Seamen.

Over the green and circling wave,
Warning the seaman from his grave,
When rocks sink deep, and billows swell,
Ding dong rings the Inchcape Bell—

Ding ! dong !

Elliston snored, fell almost out of his chair, and rubbed his eyes. I took no notice ; but proceeded, stifling something like an indignant feeling under the sound of my own poetry—

Oft through the stilly midnight gloom,
Knelling the drowned wretch to his tomb,
Through forked flash, and tempest yell,
Ding dong rings the Inchcape Bell—

Ding ! dong !

Ding dong produced little effect on the ears of the manager ; I do not suppose that the prompter's bell, or even St. Paul's would have woke him up at that moment, he was wrapt in so profound a sleep, and the smell

of laudanum for the first time assailed my olfactory nerves. The fact is, as I afterwards learned, he had had a violent fit of the gout during the night, and was then under the influence of a narcotic.

For some time, not knowing how to proceed, I read on, and then sat silent. At length he began to rouse himself, suddenly struck with an idea, and turning to the end of the M.S., I read as follows—

Gry. Mother! mother! it is accomplished!
You are avenged!

Places dumb boy in Sir John's arms, and sinks exhausted with fatigue. Grand tableau. End. Curtain falls.

I shut the book; Elliston looked vacantly around, as if in quest of his wandering ideas. At length, fixing his eyes on me with a show of understanding what he had not heard—what, in fact, had not been read.

“Good!” exclaimed he, “excellent melodrame for the Cobourg: take it there, sir; they will do it justice.”

I called up my old friend Mrs. Opie's maxim, “*bear and forbear!*” thanked

him, somewhat mortified, I acknowledge, and took my leave.

Scarcely a fortnight from this adventure, Elliston and I met again on the self-same spot, and again he inquired, in almost the self-same terms, whether I had nothing would suit them. "Yes, sir," I replied, "I have a nautical melodrame."

"Nautical, eh?—good. What do you call it? Nautical!—the very thing. What is it, eh?"

"‘The Inchcape Bell,’ sir!" intending to be a little satirical.

"Excellent! the very sort of title to make out our bill. Let me have it to read directly, sir—this very evening." My intended sarcasm was lost. He had utterly, not only forgotten the title of the piece, but every circumstance connected with it. I sent him the M.S., he read it at once, and produced it immediately. It ran eighty nights with the utmost approbation, and drew money; but of that in its place.

Maddox had, also, a great habit of fall-

ing asleep, with a cigar in his mouth, during the reading of an author's piece; but Maddox seems to have the faculty of clairvoyance, namely, *understanding* in his sleep. It is very annoying to the author, nevertheless, although not so intended; but where one is always wide awake, though ever so fast asleep, like my friend Maddox, it makes all the difference, for Maddox has a *kind* heart, I can testify to the fact. On one occasion, when taking a benefit at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, I was sadly put out for proper singers to execute the music in the "Siege of Rochelle," and happening to mention the circumstance to Maddox, he not only lent me the singers, but absolutely changed the performance at his own theatre, (the Princesses,) in order to accommodate me; and all this without on any one occasion having been under the slightest obligation to me.

After this little wandering from the main road, for the purpose of picking up a few

scattered wild flowers, let us now return to our pilgrimage.

The untoward reception of my "Father and Son" threw a great damp over my spirits. I was like a child, that runs fearlessly till he receives his first tumble, and then is afraid to venture on his feet again. On what opinion was I in future to depend? My own had proved that it could err; and that of Mr. Kemble, Coleman's, and Faucett's, seemed to be no better. I resolved to write no more. My waxen wings had melted: I felt despairingly that the sooner I was crushed upon this earth the better. My wife, with her ever gentle philosophy, always pictured hope; but I fear, especially on this occasion, that my grateful assent to her arguments fell far short of the return which her affection deserved. My pride was hurt. In vain she cited all the *great* authors that had failed in their turn. I refused to be comforted, and refused to write. I had other resources than the

stage: I wrote nearly all the stories in *Là Belle Assemblée*—it was at that time a very popular work, and beautifully illustrated. The editor applied to me in vain; I seemed to have lost my imagination. I took it into my head that the managers at the theatres royal treated me coldly, if not scornfully, and I refused to go near them. In short, I ingeniously tormented myself in every possible way, and suffered *truly* all the tortures of a d——d author. Yet it will be found hereafter that out of this mishap came one essential good, as is almost always the case: It brought me acquainted with one of my truest friends, T. P. Cooke, to whose real kindness, frankness, and friendship, I have since been so deeply indebted. But I shall have so much to say of him by and by, that I will not now enlarge either on his talents or his merits.

I had placed my life, and those of others equally dear, upon the hazard of this die, and necessity, a *true friend sometimes*, began, by the most conclusive argument, to con-

vince me that I must now float on in my own stream, let its course flow smoothly or roughly as it might. I am *human* enough, also, to confess, that a new drama which succeeded mine, meeting with a still worse fate, inasmuch as only one act was endured, consoled me—it convinced me that I was not “alone in sorrow ;” and a companion in affliction, although not a very charitable relief to attain, still is a relief—added to which, as I knew that the author of the condemned piece had given me a sly lift, “over the left,” in order to promote the facilitation of his own production. I did not feel much sympathy for him, be assured, and at the same time felt there was something like retribution still remaining, and I solemnly attest here, that never, in the whole course of my career, did I express the slightest public disapproval of another author’s work, although I have so frequently seen those do it, (*even towards my own pieces,*) whose principles should have taught them better, especially as they

entered the theatre with orders *written* by *myself*.

I now braced on my armour again, and set out once more with a renovated heart, in the exciting search of new adventures and perils. My melodrame of "Father and Son" succeeded wonderfully well at the Cobourg, for Davage was generous enough still to bring it out, with Le Clerc as Vonfranc, and H. Kemble as the Savage. I wrote a new piece called "Omala; or Settlers in America," and having finished it, at least to my own satisfaction, sent it off to Terry, then manager, in conjunction with Yates, at the Adelphi. This theatre having previously been in the possession of the Rodwells, for whom I had already written and produced in that theatre, the drama of "Waverley." I must give you Terry's reply :—

" MY DEAR SIR,—

" I lose no time in returning you
" the *Caffres*, (so called in the M.S.,) in

“ order that you may, as you say, take
“ Time by the forelock : A mode of treat-
“ ing that venerable personage which
“ should never be omitted.

“ Besides that, your drama calls too
“ largely for our limited capabilities : Scene
“ painter and machinist. We could not,
“ were it entirely fitted to our means, bring
“ it out till an advanced period of the
“ season. Meanwhile, many things more
“ immediately suited to our establishment,
“ might be prepared, while the ‘Caffres’
“ was serving your profit at another thea-
“ tre, better calculated to fulfil your scenic
“ demands. Give me leave, however, to
“ assure you, that I think it a very lively,
“ interesting, and actable piece ; a little,
“ perhaps, tending to recal to the recollec-
“ tion of ‘Incle and Yarico,’ and the
“ ‘Africans’—a point which would be
“ more against it at one of the patent
“ houses, than at a minor. The Governor
“ is a very good part as it stands, and the
“ comic ones all very good. If I might

“ advise any alteration, I should advise the
 “ simplification of the serious characters,
 “ both in the length of their speeches and
 “ style of their language. The serious
 “ interest in such plays, is always increased
 “ by condensation; and the moment the
 “ point necessary for the plot is attained,
 “ the audience are always impatient for the
 “ comic relief. The catastrophe, also,
 “ would be better compressed, and brought
 “ about with fewer changes and interrup-
 “ tions. With such a revisal upon these
 “ minor points, which *you* can easily give it,
 “ I should have little doubt on the stage of
 “ what I heartily wish you decided success.

“ I remain, dear Sir,

“ Very faithfully yours,

“ DANIEL TERRY.

“ 13, Alfred Place,

“ 8th July, 1825.”

This *well-intended* and *kindly-instructive* letter, every word of it true, I had the ingratitude, or the folly, to take in very bad

odour, and called it a pompous knowledge, showing way of evading the acceptance of my piece, and to despise the friendly suggestions as regarded the alterations altogether. The severe lesson I had just received at one of the *patent* theatres had not, as is quite evident, crushed my vanity, (and even vanity is a supporting friend under many difficulties and disappointments ; everything has its good end.) So I sent "Omala" to the Olympic to see what they would say to him. Sam Chapman was there, the Ozzrand of my Inkeeper. They accepted the piece, and Sam played Omala, as no other person, I think, could have played it. It was a masterpiece of *savage* life, and sentiment. Poor Sam ! he was a nervous, sensible little fellow. I heard that he died, somewhere in America, in 1830, in consequence of a fracture in his arm, which terminated in a mortification. Peace to his ashes. A bolder, a less deceptive heart, does not beat. I have never seen an actor like him, nor one that could have supplied his place.

Loveday played the Governor excellently well. He was a droll satirist, for I remember saying on the stage, at rehearsal, that modern authors were seldom *quoted*; to which Loveday, looking at me, replied cleverly and tartly—"That was because authors now-a-days knew d——d well how to *coat* themselves." The scenery of "Omala," without any gilding, was as beautiful as the most beautiful I have since seen on the stage—and that is saying much for it—painted by Tomkins, and the piece itself as successful as any author could have wished. It ran nearly the season. And now for the *good* which grew out of the bad luck at Covent Garden. The pieces on which they depended at the Adelphi failed, notwithstanding all the judgment of the manager, (Mr. Terry,) and we have seen that he *had* judgment, and knew well how to advise *others*.

They always make a mighty error in judgment, who imagine that a *great company* can sustain any theatre without *good*

pieces ; and Terry and Yates depended on their *company*, which was indeed a phalanx of talent. Terry, Yates, Wrench, T. P. Cooke, John Reeve, Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, and all these people in their prime. Still *they* made a failure, and played to empty benches, while the "Omala," my rejected, was filling the Olympic to overflowing. There is no calculating upon these things. The public are so vacillating.

"What shall we do for a new drama that will *bring money*?" inquired Terry, one day, querulously, in the treasury.

"There's a Mr. Ball," replied T. P. Cooke, who was receiving his salary, "he seems to hit them hard."

"Ball," reiterated Terry, "Ball, Ball? He sent me a Caffre story the other day, which I've returned. How can I now send and request him to write for us. Of course he'd sneer at us!"

"Leave it to me," answered Cooke. "You don't *know* him, I see; I'll call on him, and if he *can* hit upon anything to set

us afloat, he's the fellow that will be delighted to do it."

Cooke, therefore, came driving up to my house, with his smart chaise, and his white horse. I was at home, suffering with the tooth-ache, to which I was always a martyr, especially while I lived in Stamford Street. Cooke was a most excellent tactician, and began flattering me up with points in "Father and Son," which he said had been unappreciated, and so forth, and then recommended me to try the Adelphi.

"But the manager despises me, and has sent back my piece." The tooth left off aching.

"The manager does *not* despise you, my dear boy: Your piece was too difficult for us, the stage is small, (it was so then). Write something else; what say you to a nautical piece, by the author of the "Floating Beacon," eh? A piece, by the way, of which I have yet to speak."

"A nautical piece?"

"Yes; and I'll play the sailor."

That was no recommendation to *me*, as I had never seen Cooke play a sailor ; and I thought it impossible to eclipse Gallot as Jack Junk in the aforesaid " Floating Beacon."

" You the sailor ! Well, but where are we to find a nautical subject ?"

" Cooper's Pilot."

" The Pilot ! I've read, and don't understand it ; don't like it," said I, fretfully.

" Read it again, my boy, you'll understand it then, especially if you make out a sort of yarn, as you go along. They'll pay well, I can tell you, and the sooner you pipe all hands for action, the better."

I promised ; Cooke took his leave, while I set out for the circulating library, to bring home a copy of the Pilot, which I had altogether refused to dramatise at the Surrey, and foresaw nothing but failure in the attempt elsewhere.

CHAPTER VI.

It appears that I have somehow over-shot twenty-four, a year prolific in my productions and the changes of management. Burroughs had quitted the Surrey; and the Johnstones had taken it, with a Mr. Delaforce; I became, for the first time, an engaged author there, at a regular salary. My tragedy of *Antigone* had been got up with great splendour, and played many nights, but was too classic a subject for the Surreyites, as might have been anticipated by the most unsophisticated. Then there was the *Barber*; or, the *Mill of Bagdad*, *The Three Hunchbacks*; *Peveril of the Peak*; and the *Burning Bridge*. Of this *Burning Bridge*, I have one or two anecdotes

to record. The opening scene was an orange grove, in which Mrs. Young, and little Miss Young (afterwards the celebrated Mrs. Honey,) were discovered, the latter on a ladder, throwing the oranges, which she was gathering from a tree, into her mother's lap. Nothing could have surpassed the beauty of this scene, by Tomkins ; he was then in all his popularity, to which the elegant and picturesque costumes of the performers, gave a delightful reality. After a little interval, for a duet, between the ladies, "Take, oh take this golden fruit," Henry Kemble had to rush into the orange grove, as a sorcerer, or a tyrant ; in doing so, his long costly robes, becoming entangled with a set piece, pulled down with it, the orange tree excepted, every morsel of scenery on the stage, discovering only bare walls and flaring lamps. Imagine the consternation of the manager ; imagine the consternation of the *actor* ; imagine the consternation of the *author* ; but that's impossible ; no, it would be too much. It

could only be surpassed by that of the scene painter, who proceeded to tear the unfortunate hair from his head, while Mr. Aulde, then acting manager, rushed forward to address the almost convulsed audience, which he did in the following unmistakable speech.

“ Ladies and Gentlemen, the scenery has fallen down ! (*roars of laughter,*) Ladies and Gentlemen, honoured by your approval, if you will allow us to *draw up*—I mean *let down* the curtain, this piece shall begin over again, *from the beginning.* (*loud applause ; curtain falls*). The scene was reset ; in a few minutes the curtain rose again, and all went so smoothly to the end, the audience in so excellent a humour, that I have frequently questioned myself since, whether it would not answer the purpose, on the first night of a new doubtful piece, previously to the conclusion of the first act, to push all the scenery into the pit, by way of exciting the *tender* sympathies of the *generous* public.

There was, also, another curious accident happened, during the long run of this *Burning Bridge*, but, I regret to add, of a much more distressing nature. At the conclusion of the drama, a female spectre had to rise from a lake, surrounded by mist, which effect was produced by lamps, placed behind gauzes, surrounding the figure. When this cloud of gauzes had almost reached the ceiling, a breath of air blew one of the folds across the lamp, and the spectre's dress was instantly in flames. Poor Leslie! for it was a *gentleman* who played the *lady*, immediately made an effort to dispossess himself of his unearthly garments, and in so doing, discovered to the *amazed* audience, that he, *she* was a *Scotchman*, with his kilt on, ready dressed for the afterpiece, *Waverly*. The effect was too ludicrous, notwithstanding the peril of the circumstance, for the audience to repress their uproarious mirth, which was very soon changed into compassion by Leslie, who was terribly frightened, jumping out

of the machinery, an immense height from the stage, by which means he was, I am sorry to add, seriously injured, and never entirely recovered.

Another accident of a curious nature happened in this theatre, on the 102nd night of a spectacle called *The Fire-worshippers*. Gallot, who had to ride across the stage on a camel, decorated with gorgeous trappings, had scarcely proceeded three yards from the side scene, when the large trap gave way under the immense weight of the gigantic animal, and in an instant the poor helpless creature lay crushed, with its neck broken, in an immense box; it was impossible to extricate him, except limb by limb, which, as he expired in the course of the evening, was the eventual result. For Gallot, he saved himself by his presence of mind, throwing himself off the camel's back, to a considerable distance, with the greatest dexterity. Notwithstanding this interruption, and the confusion it excited, the spectacle was very well received, although

it went somewhat lamely. The afterpiece to follow, was a nautical melo-drama, called *The Floating Beacon*, in which Mrs. W. Clifford, and Henry Kemble were to make their appearance; Gallot, also, had to sustain a most prominent part; and all this over the body of the poor dead camel. Both spectacle and the nautical piece were mine, I leave the reader to guess the state of my feelings; the audience and the actors all out of tune. Coming events cast their shadows before them; although, alas, the shadow does not always point out the actual damage of the storm.

The curtain again rose, the scenery, by Tomkins, was beautiful, the characters so simple and natural, that it seemed as if a sudden ray of light had come over the darkness of the waters, and that a most happy voyage might be anticipated. The second scene presented a still brighter prospect: a section of *The Floating Beacon*, the surrounding waves, the moving horizon, done to such a perfect reality, all painted

on gauze, that you might well have believed yourself absolutely on board. The appearance of Mrs. W. Clifford, as the Maniac of the Wreck, in her picturesque costume, with her magnificent figure, and large black eyes, gave a perfect finish to the whole ; so perfect, that the dome of the theatre rang with general and enthusiastic applause. Gallot's acting, too, as Jack Junk, appeared a sort of inspiration ; his very hat, with the *picter* of his ship upon it, seemed to act, and all was proceeding thus smoothly—even the departed camel was forgot—when it was discovered that one of the principal actors could not, from a *spiritual* cause, by any means remember a word of his part, and yet, was sufficiently obstinate—not unfrequent in such attacks—to persevere in trying to perform his *best*. This, of course, like an inexperienced dancer in a quadrille, threw everybody else out. The hisses began, rage ensued. At length the curtain fell amid shouts of scorn and disapprobation.

What a change for me, in the very theatre wherein I had hitherto been so caressed. So much so, indeed, that, on entering a box, I had frequently been received by the public, like some favourite actor, and that at a time when it was not the fashion to call for the author; was not this a *viscissitude*?

No Mr. Charles Kemble followed me on this occasion with kind consoling words, as I returned home. My poor wife's voice only attempted gently to comfort me, but even her voice failed. A sleepless night, a wretched, restless day, ensued; the hour of performance returned. *The Fire-worshippers* and *The Floating Beacon*, were to be repeated. It might be thought that I, at least, should have remained away; on the contrary, my heart was ever in the battle, and there, ever, was I. To have remained away would have been the *suffering*; I, therefore, braced up my nerves to endure the worst, be it whatever it might, and

supporting myself against the back of a box, for I stood the whole evening, I once more witnessed that performance, from beginning to end.

The house was crowded; *The Fire-worshippers* went off smoothly, I did not care much about the spectacle; I detested, and always shall, pieces of gingerbread; I never wrote them, except per order. For this little nautical drama, I had an affection; it had been almost brought out against the inclination of the management. No one appeared to think highly of it, except Mrs. Clifford, Gallot, and myself; and its bad reception, on the first night, was attributed, of course, by the manager, who prided himself on his great foresight, more to its own want of merit, than the delinquency of *one* of the actors. But such were the circumstances dramatic authors had then to encounter; and too many of a similar nature are still to be encountered, I apprehend, even by the enlightened writers of the more modern drama.

The delinquent, however, of the preceding night, *had* now studied his part, got more *sober* and less *mellow* in it, and was quite capable of suiting the word to the action. The result was, that this melodrama, with which the public, the night previously, had left the theatre in disgust, made so tremendous a sensation, that it ran the actual number of one hundred and twenty consecutive nights ; nor was this all ; it was played on the same nights, by nearly the same company, at Sadlers Wells, 120 times more ; making, altogether, 240 consecutive nights. I am especially particular in recording this last event, because it tends so practically to prove and illustrate, how very deeply an *author* may be injured by the disaffection of a single actor, and how immediately he is at the mercy of a simple, untoward circumstance. I absolutely saw an excellent piece fail, at Drury Lane Theatre, merely because a corporal, on account of the heat of the

weather, could not contrive to make his false moustachios stick on. It is now more than twenty years since the production of the *Floating Beacon*, but I think I can speak with perfect truth in stating, that there has scarcely been one week since, in which it has not been represented in some theatre, either in London, the country, or America.

I spoke, a few pages back, of my drama of "Waverley," it was my first attempt at the Adelphi, and comes charged with happy memories, or I should not have recurred to it. It was then I came to make my first acquaintance with George Herbert Rodwell, the composer and *melodist*; his brother Thomas being manager of the theatre (a very clever man, and a good author,) Rodwell's music to *Waverley*, was amongst the first of his many happy productions, and the snatches of songs so exquisitely sung for him, by that lovely syren, Mrs. Waylett, (and how is it we

have no longer such exquisite warblers,) in the character of Davie Galettley, elicited universal approval. John Reeve, too, first played for me as Mrs. Nosebag, and when I think of the truthful, and humourous matter-of-fact existence which he embodied in that character, the same feeling of a sad conviction comes over me, that I have, as regards the recollection of the dulcet beauty of Mrs. Waylett's natural voice, that every superior natural talent has been long fading away. Mrs. Waylett's *was* a voice, a *woman's* voice; such as *men*, with manly feelings, love to hear; and had in it none of those deep notes, now so *dear* to Englishmen, which make one almost doubt the sex of the singer. For my own part, with some exceptions, I confess that I think those heavy voices, in females, positively *distressing*; everything masculine in a woman, is to me, *almost* as disgusting, as effeminacy in a man. As regards both Mrs. Waylett, and John Reeve, it is not so

many years since they were both before the public, and I appeal to any person, who has heard the one, or seen the other, whether my opinion of their talent be in the least exaggerated; because I know that it is the custom of the time we live in, for people of a certain age, to imagine, that we of another certain age, judge by gone-by opinions and feelings. To counteract this, it is to be greatly regretted that your actors cannot leave behind them such astounding convictions, as those of the old masters, in painting—Titian, Claude, Rembrandt, &c., I am simply speaking of ballad singing, likely, very soon, to be exploded, unless indeed, some new and bewitching Bland or Waylett, spring up, with a voice capable of fascinating English ears, by simple and pure melody, instead of what very few understand, however much they affect it, that is to say, the grand scena, the bravura, and the brillante. Everybody has heard the old anecdote of the

lady, who explained to Dr. Johnson, the difficulties of the scena she had been executing, and the doctor's celebrated *blunder*, "I wish to goodness, madam, such difficulties were *impossible*." However, at all events, I do not coincide with the great pedant, in this opinion; I admire scientific difficulties, in grand operas—*Le Prophète*, or *Les Huguenots*—beautifully executed, by such professors as Viardot, Grisi, Garcia, Bosio, Mario, &c., but it disgusts me to hear people affect and disdain, because we have fine foreign flowers in our hot houses, native daisies on the village green, or the sweet violet in the hedge. It is a vulgar error, nevertheless most promptly have I lent all my genius, such as it was, to aid the cause of music. The choruses in the "Barber of Seville," and "Figaro," were first written by me, under Sir Henry Bishop. In such a state were operas, previously to that time, that I have seen Jones (a great actor,) play the

part of Count Almaviva, as a speaking character, and when it came to the singing part, another individual step forward and vocalise, in fact the count had apparently a singing *double*. Very few really know how much music is indebted for its progress in this country to Bishop, or half the obstacles he had to contend with. His enthusiasm in his profession was boundless, but his indolence was almost a complete counteraction. I wrote for him, entirely under his own direction, an opera on the subject of the "Pilgrimage to Canterbury," he liked it *exceedingly*, and at a time when money was almost vital to him, a publisher, through me, offered to pay him £300, when he had completed the first act. He never composed a single note.

I ought, perhaps, to apologise to my indulgent readers, for this little digression in favour of ballads and ballad singing, which I am always ready to champion,

looking upon their sweet combination, as a sort of national art. It may be a weakness, and an ignorant one, as no doubt it is, but, though I admire the costly Italian villa, with its jasper columns and gilded domes on the hill, I see no cause for pulling down the little woodbine-covered cottage in the vale. And now to proceed. After a good deal of buccaneering at the minors, which might not prove interesting to the general reader, I shall leap at once to the production of the *Pilot* at the Adelphi, which, thanks to the exertions of my friend T. P. Cooke, found its way thither, and before the public without any great exertions on my part.

I have already said, in a former page, although it might have been better said here, in the first instance, that I did not, as Mr. Bunn calls it, "tackle" greatly to the subject. At Cooke's suggestion, however, I again procured the novel, which my dear wife, with her anxious assiduity, read

to me, commending every particle, as she read, to encourage and inspire me. I made the sketch as we proceeded, and wrote the various songs, (ballads,) also, "*When the sails are furled*," in particular, and in the course of a very short time had completed rather a bold programme of my three acts. Having done this, I put the M.S. in my pocket, and posted off to Cooke's, in Torrington Square, where he then resided, to hear what *his* opinion was of my progress. Cooke was ill in bed with the gout: this was a damper, for a hornpipe affair especially. Mrs. Cooke, however, (with the kindness she always displayed,) from the top of the stairs, requested me to walk up, and I perceived to my great consternation, that the dirt on the soles of my boots, for I was somewhat abstracted, had left a visible impression on every step of the white holland which covered the stair carpet. I saw also that she was annoyed; she saw that I was very sorry. A smile of forgive-

ness set all right. I was in the sick man's chamber. Cooke had a violent fit of the gout, to which he was unfortunately but too subject. He welcomed me, and sat up nevertheless to hear me read the piece ; but, as there was not the slightest apprehension of *his* falling asleep, like Elliston, he became quite interested, as was also Mrs. Cooke, who did me the favour to be a listener. Of all things, I love a female audience ; and *if* a shade had come over her countenance as regarded her snowy stair-cloth, she made me ample amends by praising my *poetry*—the first song and duet especially. The following lines they made me repeat over and over again. Was not I proud ?—and am I not even now a *leetle* vain of the recollection ?

“ While the level deck his feet pace,
“ 'Mid the silvery clouds on high,
“ He views his Lucy's sweet face,
“ Like an angel's beaming from the sky.”

The greatest commendation followed the

conclusion of this perusal, and as Cooke requested me to leave the M.S. for the purpose of making his own remarks in private, I did so, with the utmost confidence and pleasure, and went home with my good news, which, on all occasions, was only *half* a happiness to me, till I had communicated and shared it with my devoted *better half*.

My "Omala" was now doing wonders at the Olympic; several days passed rapidly away. I received no answer from Cooke, and on returning the following Monday from the last-mentioned theatre, judge of my consternation at seeing at the lower extremity of the Adelphi play bill, the following startling announcement—

*"In rehearsal, and shortly will be produced,
"a new original Nautical Burletta, founded on
"Cooper's popular novel of the Pilot," &c., &c.*

It was quite *natural* to me to torment myself, and as I thought it very unlikely a manager would underline a piece, without previously conferring with the author, I

immediately came to the *satisfactory* conclusion that this was the production of some more *favoured* dramatist, and that I had been *excessively ill-treated*. My oracle at home, unlike most women in that respect, generally looked on the sunny side of the question, which, I am afraid to recollect, I answered peevishly, was for the sake of contradiction. However, *she* was right. While we were arguing the point, Cooke himself arrived with *the* chaise, and celebrated white horse, to conduct me to the theatre. The piece was to be read that very morning: the *sketch*! for it was never altered; and Cooke told me afterwards that he kept it back for fear I *should* alter it, as he felt that it could not be better done.

I found Terry, upon acquaintance, a very gentlemanly, intelligent man; and Yates also. They gave me good terms; and the burletta was thus admirably cast—

<i>Pilot</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Terry.
<i>Barnstable</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Yates.

<i>Boroughcliffe</i>	.	.	Mr. John Reeve.
<i>Long Tom Coffin</i>	.	.	Mr. T. P. Cooke.
<i>Serjeant Drill.</i>	.	.	Mr. Sanders.
<i>Kate Plowden</i>	.	.	Mrs. Fitzwilliam.
<i>Cecelia</i>	.	.	Miss Boaden.
<i>Irishwoman</i>	.	.	Mrs. Daly.

Nothing could have been better. The drama was as quickly produced as it had been written and underlined, and everyone knows with what triumphant success.

I shall give an extract here from Cumberland's beautiful edition of the work, which speaks better for me, than, with the modesty pertaining to authorship, I could possibly speak for myself. Besides, I owe so much to Cooper, which I respectfully acknowledge.

“ Long Tom Coffin is drawn with great
 “ energy. In the scene where he swoons
 “ and describes the storm, we are for a
 “ moment impressed with its reality: we
 “ hear the roaring of the tempest, the creak-
 “ ing of the mast, the cries of the mariners.

“ The whole scene is wrought up by mechanical skill. The lightning flashes in our eyes—the water booms in our ears. The acting was excellent: Mr. Yates played with judgment, Mr. Terry with feeling. But the crack performers were the Captain Boroughcliffe of John Reeve, and the Long Tom Coffin of T. P. Cooke. There is a quaintness of manner about Reeve—a queer gait, a droll wink, a rich chuckle, that well qualify him for characters of fun. Mr. Cooke gave a new feature to the sailor’s character: it was that of thoughtfulness and mystery—of deep-toned passion and romance. Tom on the high and giddy mast, had beheld the ocean with a meditating eye; he adored it as his element, and reposed upon its billows. Mr. Cooke embodied the utmost conception of the author; and more, his appearance was highly picturesque. Although the popularity of a piece is not the surest criterion of its merits, the present one is an exception. It was played

“ upwards of two hundred nights, and
 “ might have been played two hundred
 “ more ere it had been superseded by any-
 “ thing better.”

Coleman, though in his own dramatic writings he had been highly lavish of his oaths, invariably in fulfilling his duty as Licensor cut them out of the works of others. When the “Pilot” had become very popular, Coleman went to witness its representation. Cooke, who never failed of making an excellent point of “No, if I do I’m d——d,” on coming to the proscribed line in question, and suddenly perceiving the Licensor in the boxes, proceeded, “No, if I do I’m——” and placing his thumb with great ludicrous quaintness on his nose, stopped short, with a look so comic, that the immortal George laughed heartily himself, at a manœuvre, which told better than words, how, on other occasions, the critic’s professional morality had been attended to. The papers, the *Times* in particular, spoke in unqualified praise of the drama.

It was asserted, and I have no doubt of its truth, that the managers cleared upwards of seven thousand pounds by the production of the "Pilot;" and I must allow that much of this was due to their own exertions and talents. Terry's Pilot was a masterpiece of acting. His delivery of the following speech, was, perhaps, the finest and most impressive effect ever produced by plain speaking in a melodrama --

Pilot. Hardly could the scared wretch, who, thus, secured your boy, and clung with his other arm to the flurrying raft for support, turned his almost bewildered gaze towards the struggling object he was compelled to abandon, ere that frail form had sunk to rise no more. A moment—a moment only—in the awful pause of the tempest—one fair hand, whiter than the lashing waters around it, was lifted—thus—in silent agony above the flood, as if to speak a dying mother's gratitude—and then—then, it was all oblivion—dark despair. *Act III, Scene 5.*

Saunders, also, made quite an effect in the little part of Serjeant Drill. His droll nasal "Oh Y—e—s," in reply to Boroughcliff's commands, fairly shook the house with laughter.

On the hundredth night of the "Pilot," the managers gave a great dinner on the stage to 100 persons. Would it be believed, I was not one of the invited. Little as I ever cared, or care, about those sort of things, I confess my feelings were hurt; but my wife, my great counsellor always for the best, assured me that the "oversight," as she called it—I, "insulting neglect"—was too ridiculous not to be a forgetfulness, and begged of me to go. I did so with a very ill grace, and found a place reserved for me, and a cordial reception, with numerous apologies for what really *was* an oversight.

Of course, in dramatising this novel, I was compelled to take great liberties with the original. In a work of such a nature, magnificently abounding with *so many* mental beauties, it is difficult to make up your *heart* to dismiss one of them, in justice to the original author; yet we are compelled so to do, one after the other, in order to meet the time and circumstances of the drama, and also to dovetail the chasms with

fittings of our own manufacture. This is not so easy as those imagine who write such severe theatrical critiques on us poor dramatists. It is no easy task to adapt a novel for the stage, as those flighty reviewers will find, if they once set about trying the experiment. Independently of this, I was compelled to turn the tide a little, and change the plot in favour of our own nation: I was afraid, else, of giving a national offence to the *less enlightened* portion of the audience. I do not suppose either way, that the license *would have been refused*. But reflections on these points had made me, in the first instance, decline dramatising the work. I was fearful of meeting any popular prejudice, by which the piece might have been upset; and I hope the expedient I hit upon, which was nothing more than allowable to dramatic tact, gave no offence to any American feeling, for I assure them on the other side of the water that I never entertained for them the slightest *feeling* save that of a *brother*. And, after all, I

hear that they have done themselves ample justice by turning the tables on me again, and I congratulate them on *their* dramatic tact accordingly. The piece has been equally successful in America.

I fancy it was somewhere about this time that I went to pass the summer with my wife and our little girl, Louisa, at Hastings. I had written, or was writing a work called *The Songs of the Birds*, with Rodwell, the composer, who was of our party, and a happy, merry party it proved, for Rodwell, ever a most joyous companion, was then "a gay young fellow, full of mirth, and full of glee." At Hastings, we encountered Stanfield, the celebrated painter, then scene painter at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

It was with Stanfield I first ventured on the briny ocean, of which I had written so much, thanks to the hints supplied me by others. I shall never forget the novelty and delight of my sensations, as the bark bounded over the brisk billows. I had

speedily made up my mind to take at least a voyage round the world, so buoyant was my heart with air-like spirits; when suddenly a dark cloud apparently rushed over them, and my heart fell at least fifty degrees: a horrible nausea took possession of me; Stanfield appeared mightily to enjoy this reverse of courage, although, for my part, I saw, at least felt, nothing in it to laugh at; and by the time we reached land, scarcely a couple of miles, it seemed to me *sixty*, I was almost in a state of prostration, so upset and ill indeed, that I was compelled to go home and retire to bed. I shall never forget my first sea trip with Stanfield, off Hastings. What a frightful malady is this sea sickness, and how incomprehensible. I know of no suffering equal to it; yet, almost everyone makes it a subject of ridicule. In crossing the Atlantic many die of it; and poor young Macfarren, the talented painter, had the dreadful misfortune to lose his sight in consequence of violent attacks of sea sickness,

on his voyage to America. On the other hand, they tell us, in consumptive cases, it has frequently proved most beneficial ; and it is a blessing that most constitutions, I believe, find it so beneficial, though, for my own part, I should almost prefer death to a very long sea sickness.

I wrote, at Hastings, my drama of the " Inchcape Bell," which was produced by Mr. Elliston, as I have already related, and it was here that Stanfield suggested to me the story of " The Devil's Elixir," for Drury Lane. He promised to paint the scenery himself ; and his scenery was, indeed, something worth writing for.

What a beautiful romantic place is Hastings !—with its Dripping Well, its Lover's Seat, its solitary coves, and cliffs, and shady, hazel coppiced meadows. There is scarcely a turn which is not poetry ; at every step we pause either to look up or down at some new beauty. Then there are so many antiquities, which wake up a pleasing his-

torical feeling to the mind : the landing of the Norman conqueror, the old table rock, on which it is said he dined with his barons ; the ruins of the chapel on the high cliff, and the open tombs of departed greatness, whose last resting places have outlived their ashes. All these things are curious subjects for speculation and reflection ; while to those whose minds are not prone to worldly uncertainties, and like not to dwell on serious or sad thoughts, Hastings still offers full compensation in its lively society, its joyous places of resort, its health-breathing air, and its luxuriant bathing. I heard Miss Love one morning trying the effect of her voice amongst the rocks at Hastings !

My next attempt at the Adelphi, was in a piece of diablerie called " The Flying Dutchman," which many people preferred to the Pilot. These sort of dramas were then very much the vogue, and " The Flying Dutchman" was not by any means

behind even Frankenstein, or Der Freschütz itself in horrors and blue fire. The subject was a very fresh one, though it had so much of salt water in its composition.

T. P. Cooke was the Dutchman, which I don't believe he ever greatly fancied ; however, he played it, as he looked it, to perfection.

Terry was Peppercoal ; Yates, Barnstable ; John Reeve, Von Bummel ; Wrench, Toby Varnish ; Lestelle, Miss Boden ; and Lucy, Mrs. H. Hughes ; Paulo, the Black. This drama caused a great sensation with the public, especially with the more romantic portion, and was played nearly the whole season, although its success suffered comparatively by that of the Pilot ; the managers—most inconsistently—were in the habit of depreciating its success by the extraordinary popularity of its predecessor : though right glad would they have been afterwards to have met with a drama popular as “The Flying Dutchman.” The long run of my pieces became

injurious to me with managers in the end, as every one expected a drama of mine *must* go at least a hundred nights, and if it only reached forty or fifty, they looked upon it as a dreadful failure, and would ask me how it happened that I did not write them so good a piece as the Pilot, as if to insure a long run existed within myself; whereas a man might as well attempt to command the weather, as to command the success, or run, of any dramatic work whatever.

During the rehearsals of "The Flying Dutchman," Cooke walked through his part like a person who submits, with noble resolution, to a martyrdom. On the first night's representation, the tremendous applause he met with, being in that part a great actor, in spite of himself, convinced him thoroughly that he had made a slight mistake. Accordingly, the next morning at rehearsal, with a very good and right-minded feeling, in which he was never deficient, he deputed his wife, a most excellent

lady, who, though not a theatrical, happened to be present, to offer me some acknowledgement for the coolness he had displayed: with a sweet smile she took up the prompter's pen, a plumed pen, and advancing towards me with it in her hand, like a palm branch, said she had come with a flag of truce from Cooke, that he thought, from Vanderdecken being a silent part, it would prove ineffective. My reply was—"When the refractory child smiles, the father not only forgives, but forgets everything." I need not add that Cooke's hand and mine were quickly linked together, and a firmer friend I do not possess. His acting of Vanderdecken had in it a sublimity of awful mystery, which those who have seen him in the part can alone comprehend.

My "Devil's Elixir" had been written and presented to Mr. Price, (then manager at Drury Lane): for I must here remark that the Covent Garden people, notwithstanding all my successes at the minors, had shown themselves somewhat ungraciously,

towards me, ever since the failure of my "Father and Son." Price gave me no sort of reply about the Elixir, neither did he purpose to swallow the dose, although it had been presented and recommended by the hand of the immortal Stanfield himself. I wrote a note of inquiry; I received no answer. At length, one day, when I applied personally, a painful ordeal. I was told by a messenger of the manager at the hall door of the theatre that if I wanted my M.S. I might take it and devote it to whatever purpose I pleased. Indignant at such an affront, I, of course, requested back the manuscript, which the man procured, and I carried it out of the theatre in no very pleasing frame of mind. Not long after this event I received an invitation to dine with George Rodwell, to meet Peake on business, the popular author of the "Hundred Pound Note," &c., &c. This business turned out to be that Peake had dramatised the story of "The Bottle Imp," which was but another version of the

"Devil's Elixir," and was about to produce it under Mr. Arnold's management at the English Opera, and as Peake professed himself no poet, I was in request to write the songs and concerted pieces, which Rodwell undertook to compose. Good night, then, said I internally, to the "Devil's Elixir;" and with good heart prepared to enlist all my best energies in the service of "The Bottle Imp."

Rodwell had been so successful with my words of "When the Sails are Furled," and "Return, oh! my Love," in the "Flying Dutchman," that he was very anxious I should write the songs in Mr. Peake's new burletta. I did my best, and we were equally successful in the songs "*Ye Bright and Glittering Palaces!*" and "*They Mourn Me Dead in my Father's Halls,*"—the latter, to a charming melody, was delightfully sung by Wood, and twice encored the first night, rendered infinite service to Peake in a most equivocal state of the performance. Such was the favour shown to

this little operetta, that, eventually, it absolutely found its way to the boards of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, where it was equally well received. And now I come to record another circumstance, whereby the very obstacle supposed to be thrown in the way of the production of a drama, is the actual cause of its being produced, at the very theatre, too, in which it might have been considered most likely to shut it out.

The approbation bestowed upon "The Bottle Imp," induced Mr. Kemble to regret that it had not been originally one of their own productions, rather than that of the English Opera. I told him then the circumstance of my having written a similar story—"The Devil's Elixir"—which the similarity of Mr. Peake's operetta would, of course, prevent my offering to any theatre. Mr. Kemble did not perceive the similarity. He had read the story in German, and would like to see what I had done with it.

Of course it was soon in his possession, and I was appointed to call the following

Wednesday for an answer. I called on the Wednesday. Mr. Kemble had forgotten all about the Elixir, or what had become of it; at length he recollected that he had given it to Faucett to read, and desired me to go across the stage and knock at Faucett's room door, and make inquiries whether he had read "The Devil's Elixir."

To knock at Faucett's door at any time was anything but agreeable: especially if it should happen at a period when he had been in the slightest degree annoyed by one of the thousand and one vexations which perpetually buzz about a manager like a swarm of gnats by the side of a river in summer time. I plucked up resolution, however. Somebody cried snarlingly "Come in!" I opened the door, there I found Faucett and Mr. Morton, author of "Speed the Plough," the most liberal of all dramatic readers.

Faucett absolutely smiled, and said blandly—"If you have come about your little opera, Mr. Morton likes it, so do I;

it does you credit ; it's better written than the generality of such ——" he meant *trash*, but said *things*.

Mr. Morton paid me many kind and gentlemanly compliments, not only on the present drama, but on many of my productions which he had heard of, I should say not witnessed. And he was as sincere in his opinions as in his good intentions, being a man perfectly devoid of any jealous feelings, and a true friend ever ready to extend his hand to rising genius wherever he met with it, or wherever it might need his *assistance*. "Your 'Devil's Elixir' will be put in hand *directly*!" observed he, with a smile, intending, I could perceive, to delight me.

"Directly!" responded Faucett. "Strange second title, though ; strange second title—'*Shadowless Man*!'" And he left the room to proceed to the copyist, reiterating between a laugh of approval and derision—"*Shadowless Man*."

Lest I should become tiresome to the

general reader, I will not dwell upon the rehearsals which followed of *The Devil's Elixir; or, the Shadowless Man*. And how agreeable and intellectual all rehearsals invariably were at Covent Garden in those days; especially to an author single-minded and inclined to believe every complimentary expression sincere. Four years had elapsed since the first of my failures at this theatre; and during all that time I had not been enabled, by any sort of intercession, interest, or talent, to recover my caste on its boards. I had often felt this deeply, and the production of the "Bottle Imp," and the brutal sort of rejection of operetta at Drury Lane, inspired me with any emotion rather than a presentiment of good fortune. I was almost afraid to try the experiment, remembering how they lauded and praised "Father and Son," even the very licenser, who spoke of its merits at a public dinner so Mrs. Gibbs, assured me. I became *frightened* at a

single word said in favour of the Elixir, and shut my ears from the slightest breath of praise as from an evil omen.

The night came—April 20th, 1829. The bill was an extraordinary one; and the house, at half-price, crowded. *The Point of Honour* commenced the evening, in which Charles Kemble played: then came *Honest Thieves*, in which glorious John Reeve, lately transplanted from the Adelphi to Covent Garden, sustained, I thought, or felt, to a most fatiguing length, the part of Obadiah. Then up went the curtain to the *Devil's Elixir*. The cast was admirable: Mr. Warde, Diddear, Mr. Wood, (the splendid tenor,) O. Smith, Keeley, Miss Goward, (afterwards Mrs. Keeley,) and Miss Hughes, the *prima donna* of the theatre. The music by Rodwell. The scenery by the Grieves and Finley. In a word, nothing could be better put upon the stage, under the direction of that great artist, Farley, or better acted, or better sung, and

the "Devil's Elixir" was perfectly successful at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden.* I see a critique, from the *Times*, I believe, which, after speaking some length in approval, concludes by saying—"The piece " was exceedingly well received, and will " probably have, as it fully deserves, a considerable run."

After these circumstances, I think no author ought to despond at a rejection. I should have thrown this operetta on the back of the fire when I took it from Drury Lane, but for a kind remonstrance from my wife. Yet it eventually brought me two hundred pounds, and established me as a successful writer at Covent Garden Theatre ! Such are our chances—such our vicissitudes. I perceive by the bill, June 22nd, 1829,

* From the *Times*, 1829. *Covent Garden Theatre*.—The new piece at this theatre is called the *Devil's Elixir* ; or, the *Shadowless Man*. The main plot is taken from Hoffman's extraordinary romance, which bears the first title, and some use has been made of *Peter Schlemile* to supply that part which relates to the *Shadowless Man*. The author has managed his materials most ingeniously, and has given his drama a very original character.

that the "Devil's Elixir" was still running : in fact, it continued its uninterrupted course till the end of the season, when it had the honour of a bespeak from H.R.H. the Duchess of Clarence, afterwards the never-to-be-sufficiently-lamented—the *universally beloved* Queen Adelaide.

They agreed to give me £20 per week for this piece, and the first week paid me : the second week I was told by Mr. Robinson, the treasurer, that I must wait for my money, as the houses were nearly reduced to half-price. This seemed strange, considering the receipts of the half-price might fairly have been attributed to the new melodrame ; but the argument made use of was a very good one, namely, that the latter could not be played without a first piece before it ; consequently, those actors, the working machinery of the house, must be paid, seemingly, out of the money attracted by me. The theatre was doing badly, although the first piece was *Ivanhoe*, the opera, with Phillips, Wood, and Miss

Paton in it, whose salaries were something enormous. I did not complain—I never did—but went a tour, I forget where. During my absence, I saw by the papers that the theatre was to be sold: a complete revolution having taken place. I thought then all hope of payment for the “Devil’s Elixir,” was at an end; so having spent all my money, I came home to work again. An agreeable surprise, however, awaited me, for the theatre did not sell, and Miss Fanny Kemble having appeared made such a tremendous hit, that a complete reaction had taken place, and I found on my table, amongst many other notes not quite so pleasant, one from Mr. Robinson, who requested to see me. I went, and had the pleasure to receive, with many *thanks* from the worthiest of treasurers, a cheque for £150.

July 15th, 1829. My poetry, unpretending and simple as it was, began to recommend me to composers, I wrote for Mr. Hawes a libretto to “Die Rauber-

brant, the Robber's Bride," the music by Ferdinand Ries. It was well supported by H. Phillips, Sappio, Perkins, Ransford, Salter, J. Russell, Miss Betts, and Miss H. Cause, and produced at the English Opera. You will perceive how different affairs were even at this small distance of time, (only twenty years ago,) in theatricals. A man with a tolerable share of genius and *industry* could turn himself respectably about and gain a genteel living. We had, even then, an opera, a legitimate theatre, and an English opera for *native* talent to display itself in. Where are such appropriate temples now? Echo answers where? I feel that a brief future will restore them. Of all things we want a musical Vaudeville theatre, where young composers might try their scarce fledged wings, before, like the lark, they attempt to soar into the high atmosphere of music.

About this period I was engaged by the house of Goulding and D'Almaine to proceed to Boulogne, in France, to assist Mr., afterwards Sir Henry Bishop, in the

construction of an opera on the subject of Boueldien's *Les Deux Nuits*. It appears that my songs sold exceedingly well, and the manager and the publisher are naturally alike anxious to secure the talent of any individual, without deference or admiration, by whom there is the slightest chance of making money. Speculation is the same everywhere. Mr. Bishop lodged in the Grande Rue. I, (with my wife and daughter, for, like Darius, I could not have travelled without my female establishment,) in some street nearer to the sea, the name of which I cannot at this moment recollect. The vast difference, which, even this slight change from England effects both in the body and mind, is truly amazing. There was only one thing which hung like a nightmare on my spirits all the period of my stay: it was the dread of the frightful seasickness to be renewed on the passage back. Could I have supported myself and family in France, I had *gladly* remained there for ever, rather than again undergo the torture

inflicted by the waves and the steam packet. I could compare it to nothing except a burning wheel flying round and round the head with a grating velocity, incalculable. I must have suffered more than other people, because I observed on landing, others could laugh and eat, while I was compelled to be supported to the hotel and remain for at least a day almost insensible. So changed was my personal appearance, even in crossing from Dover to Calais, that when I landed at the latter place, neither Rodwell nor Stanfield, who were standing on the pier at the time, recognised me! Inside places by the English coach were secured for us, directly I came a little to myself, to proceed to Boulogne, but, having heard so much respecting the cloudless blue sky of France, I was weak enough to suppose, because we were on the other side of the Channel, that the atmosphere must remain for ever, as it actually at that moment appeared, one dome of liquid azure, and therefore thankfully resigned our places in

exchange for others outside, to so many more clear-sighted French people, who had the sagacity to foresee the pelting and pitiless storm which ensued, when we had proceeded about a third of the way on our journey. My heavens ! that journey. Never shall I forget it. Talk of English showers : there was no one drop I think in that *shower* would not have overflowed an engine bucket. The water seemed to boil as it fell. The ground absolutely smoked. At length we were compelled to turn round the coach, stand still, and endure it with our best philosophy, almost crouching under the horses, for at least three quarters of an hour. My wife, who had a purple travelling dress on, became like a female Frankenstein—hands and face of the same imperial dye. And in this triumphant state, after remounting our wet seats, in a perfectly bright and scorchingly provoking sunshine, we entered the far-renowned Boulogne-sur Mer. Yet, annoying as it was, I would rather undergo twenty such peltings of the elements, than

endure one quarter of an hour's sea sickness. I had a certain forewarning of the baneful effects of this malady on some constitutions before I set my foot on the packet at Dover; as, for instance, meeting on the quay a Mr. W——, a bookseller in the Strand, whom I knew well enough, and perceiving that he looked ashy pale, even to his lips. "You are going to try a change of air for your health?" I pityingly inquired. "Not at all," was the reply, "mine is simply a tour of pleasure; but, the fact is, I am sea sick *by anticipation*." Here, then, *was* a case of suffering forestalled and prolonged even beyond my own!!

Pleasantly enough passed the days at Boulogne: eating, drinking, strolling, and bathing, although I was within a very limited distance of being one morning swept away by the eddy, from my ignorance of the nature of the shore, and drowned—and should have been, but for the timely warning of Mr. Rodwell, senr., who, aware of my peril, was watching me most

anxiously from the shore. The days passed rapidly ; not so the work we came to execute ; for, still to do my inspired friend, Sir Henry, justice, he was never a warm advocate for haste over works which required deliberation, while time for that deliberation remained : but when that time no longer remained, he knew better how to apply double the steam than any other professor I had ever, or have ever, since *sailed* with. A spur to prick the sides of our intention speedily arrived in the form of a letter from Soho Square. The opera was already accepted at Covent Garden Theatre ! Therefore, it was highly necessary, so speedily as possible, that it should be forthcoming in London, at all events it was time to make a beginning. Bishop now set to in good earnest, and accordingly we “ piped all hands.” I wrote, so did the composer, unceasingly, till our toil was ended, and the libretto and score, bound neatly together, forthwith dispatched with all due caution and diligence to head quarters.

I do not quite recollect what plausible excuse was tendered; even by poet or composer, for tarrying behind when the M.S. was already *en route*. Yet do I remember me of a somewhat romantic intention, suggested by Sir Henry, of forthwith proceeding to Paris, in an open voiture of the country, drawn by certain white horses with sweet tinkling bells above their heads. We were to travel by a circuitous route—through roads fringed with clustering apple trees, spreading their luxuriant green arms above our heads, to shelter us from the golden-rayed, but scorching sun. There were to be vine-mantled cottages by the way side, with many stream-tinkling nooks, and the luscious fruit eaten, and the light wine drank from rustic tables, supplied by the most picturesque and pretty landladies that ever smiled in Normandy lappets, or capered in wooden *sabottes*. But alas! for the delusive dreams of poets and composers, all this fairy scene was suddenly put to flight by the startling intelligence that nei-

ther score nor libretto had ever arrived in London! Every inquiry at the diligence office proved unsatisfactory, the parcel had been duly entered, and sent to England by the packet accordingly.

It was now time for us to decamp : and vine-clad vales, and the voiture, with its white, bell'd-steeds, were looked upon as airy hopes which had faded away too suddenly. Our quest must be for realities. The horrible reality of sea sickness was but too certain, amongst them, at least—*pour moi*. However, in my alarm about the loss of the invaluable, I don't think I did suffer quite so much this time ; and, on landing at Dover, was able to proceed to make inquiries concerning the lost opera. At the custom house no person knew anything respecting such an entry. If booked in France it had never arrived in England. Had the greedy waves swallowed our labours ? Certain conviction gave way to despair. We neither knew what to say or how to act, and were about to retire in the

utmost bewilderment and despondency of both heart and mind, when suddenly I perceived a fellow bringing forward a variety of commodities which had been just recovered from the sea, into which it was impossible to tell how they had been immersed. I thought that I recognised, amongst the stray moveables, a certain brown paper parcel, the outline of which was familiar to me, and on casting my eyes over the inscription thereon, notwithstanding its saturated condition, I distinctly traced, in Sir Henry's well-known writing, the words Soho Square. Only fancy; it *was* the identical lost sheep—the veritable opera which, amongst a variety of heaven knows what, had been just rescued from the all devouring fishes. How this happened never staid we to inquire, nor to lose time in vain reproof. The delighted compositori clutched the score in his arms, as if it had been his only child, and bore it off with an air of truly parental and triumphant satisfaction, to the Ship Tavern, where a

good substantial *English* dinner awaited our return, with whatever appetite we might; and be sure it was with a much better one than we anticipated on going out. A bumper was quaffed to the unbounded success of *Les Deux Nuits*; or, *the Night before the Wedding*, as it was called, and from its miraculous escape from the vast ocean, great auguries were drawn in favour of its final reception before an *appreciating* British public; who, perhaps, had they known this little history as they know it now, might then have displayed at least a more indulgent taste. *Les Deux Nuits* was not flatteringly received. Madame Vestris, for whom the part of Rose was intended, was *indisposed*, and unable to play it. She had played better parts in her time. And a Mr. Deane, a young man who made his debut in *Valentine*, was anything but equal to the stage, although possessed of a fine voice, but that is not always sufficient, consequently, after a few nights, though never disapproved, *Les Deux Nuits* had

ceased to exist—buried, perhaps, in the waves of oblivion.

In the meantime the success of the *Pilot* had continued unabated. It had been revived at the Adelphi for Matthews—the Matthews who superseded Mr. Terry in his share of the management. Of course he enacted the part of Boroughcliff, and sang several of his popular Yankee songs—“*The Hunters of Kentucky*,” &c.

Of Matthews, that extraordinary genius, it would be superfluous to relate any anecdotes, every event of his intellectual life is before the public. He was the true Yorick of his time: we shall never look upon his like again. Worshipped by the public, his nerves were still of so fine a temperament, that, like the chords of an Æolian harp, they would tremble, and murmur too, at a breath. Alas! how frequently does this miserable calamity embitter the whole existence of men of talent. Yet, when we conceive that the fineness of the fibre constitutes the beauty of the texture, we must

cease to deplore that altogether as a misfortune, without which, perhaps, perfection were unattainable ; and, as an artist, Matthews *was perfect*.

I wrote now an *entertainment*, for Yates, called "Mr. Chairman ;" it was in the same style as those performed by Matthews—a monodrame ; that is, one actor playing "many parts," and, as Yates gave an excellent imitation of Matthews, he contrived to throw into this performance a vast deal of the other's raciness, if not a vast deal of his originality. One created ; the other improved creation. Speaking of Yates's propensity for imitating Matthews, brings to my recollection a droll anecdote, not unamusing.

During the rehearsal of this very "Mr. Chairman," I noticed, for the first time, that Yates limped a little, and demanded of his valet the cause. "Don't you know ?" inquired the fellow, patronisingly, and surprised. "He broke his leg at Vauxhall !" "Which leg ?" interrogated I. "Can't

say, exactly," was the reply. "*Same leg as Matthen's*, I 'spose!" Matthews had actually broken his leg on some unfortunate occasion, and limped *very much* in consequence.

1830. The *Pilot* had now made its way to Covent Garden Theatre, where it was equally well received as elsewhere—T. P. Cooke sustaining his original part of Long Tom. Up to this period I had produced, (for I was never idle mentally, though sadly so bodily, I confess,) "the Life of Nelson," "The Earthquake," and the "Red Rover," at the Adelphi. They had seventeen versions, Buckstone assured me, of the latter piece sent in, such was the rage for writing nautical pieces, in consequence of the success of Jerrold's beautiful melodrame of "Black Eyed Susan," and the "Pilot;" about the remuneration for which such exaggerated tales went abroad. And as my "Red Rover" was the last written, and only presented when all the rest had been returned, I feel gratified—I feel thankful that I stood

in no man's light; and, in fact, knew nothing about the others, or I should not have attempted the subject—I should not even with my experience have had the courage. Mrs. Edwin played in this drama, who was so celebrated, before my time, for her beauty and talent, when Elliston seceded from Drury Lane to the Olympic, a charming actress, and the remains of her beauty still most fascinating, notwithstanding her years. I do not believe that a more lively impression has been made by any of my pieces than by the “Red Rover.” Signor Paulo was admirable in Guinea, Wilkinson in the Tailor, and T. P. Cooke's Fid was, perhaps, his *very best* performance.

Mr. Bishop, (Sir Henry,) engaged me to write the words for “Ninetta; or, the Maid of Palaiseau,” at Covent Garden, in which Mrs. Wood played Ninetta. I wrote this opera again for Drury Lane some years after, the Covent Garden proprietors refusing to lend their score to the rival theatre, for the purpose of introducing to the

British public the beautiful Madame Albertazzi.* Poor Albertazzi! she died young, in a deep decline, as I heard. Her first appearance was at Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket, where she was received with immense approval as Cinderella. The newspapers overflowed with her praises. She was an Englishwoman by birth, and

* This last libretta was written, piece by piece, and sent per post from Peckham. See another interesting note of Bishop's—

“ 4, Albion Place, Hyde Park,
“ Friday Morning.

“ MY DEAR BALL,—

“ The always welcome, (from *you*,) postman's knock
“ came not last night at the usual hour, and makes me
“ tremble lest something should have caused delay! How-
“ ever, I must *hope*!

“ You will find that the *dialogue* which brings on *Mor-*
“ *ville* directly before the *Quintetto*, No. 14, must *now* be
“ *restored*, as he does not come on in the *Quintet*, but
“ before it.

“ I feel very anxious to make a great push, and do the
“ **WHOLE** of the *last* *Finale* as I at first gave it you, as it
“ gives something for *Morville* and the others to do—we
“ must try for it

“ Speed, my boy!—Speed—speed—speed! Mind,
“ though, I am not complaining; for you have achieved
“ *wonders*.

“ Ever yours truly,
“ HENRY R. BISHOP.”

her voice and execution have seldom been surpassed by a *foreigner*. She eventually sang in her own language, (English,) not only at Drury Lane, but at the Princesses' Theatre, in Loder's celebrated opera of the "Night Dancers," and always with the same admiration. Her Annette was exquisite, but the impression left on my mind by Mrs. Wood, (Miss Paton,) was not to be erased even by the charms of the bewitching Albertazzi.

CHAPTER VII.

IN 1830, through the interest of my trusty and untiring friend Sir H. Bishop, who seemed determined never to lose sight of me, I was engaged as writer of original ballads and vaudevilles at the Royal Gardens, Vauxhall, under the management of Messrs. Gye and Hughes: and most excellent were the terms I received—added to which, there was something so delightful in the enlightened society of the worthy proprietors, and their families, who vied with each other in showing such unceasing attention and courtesy, that I must have been insensible and ungrateful indeed not to have been very happy in such a position. We were to play vaudevilles, and for that pur-

pose an excellent company had been selected, namely Mrs. Fitzwilliam, Miss Hughes, of Covent Garden, Gattie, T. Cooke, Morley, Stansbury, Williams, Foster, Robinson, and I know not who else. Our first vaudeville was a curtailment of the *Maid of the Oaks*, which succeeded extremely well; when the death of King, (George the Fourth,) and the accession of His Majesty William the Fourth, induced us to change the style of our performances, in accordance with the change in the times. Accordingly, in a very short space of time, I had written a new musical burletta, called

William and Adelaide,

which, being exceedingly national and nautical, was received with universal and marked applause, and ran the whole season; so that my labour, as regarded vaudeville writing, was very light indeed, and as the songs were little or no trouble to me, the *toil* of the season seemed very like a *pleasure*.

It was almost invariably, my happy

fortune to make excellent, and lasting friends wherever I went; but with the Gyes' and the Hughes' a friendship sprung up with both families, which is as fresh at this moment, as it was then; and I have no doubt will last till we are all no more. To say nothing of the esteem which Sir Henry Bishop continued to display towards both me and my family. And just to shew how domestic and unostentatious a popular genius can be, I think I shall be warranted in publishing the following truly kind letter, which I received from him at Margate, during the Vauxhall season; and, also, at a more distant period, a note from Wells, in Somersetshire, shewing how rationally and readily we worked together.

“ 15 Princes' Crescent, Margate.

“ Tuesday, August 31st. 1830.

“ MY DEAR BALL,—

“ As you may probably be *inclining*
“ towards coming to Margate in this week, it
“ has occurred to me to write what, had I

“ thought of it earlier, I should have
 “ written before, namely, that if you will
 “ let me know the *precise day* of your
 “ coming, I shall be very happy to look out
 “ for a lodging for you here, if you will also
 “ say the kind of one you require, the price
 “ of it, &c., and though I would not *take it*
 “ until you had seen it, I may have found
 “ one that will suit you, ready for you to *look*
 “ at and *approve*, the moment you arrive.
 “ If, also, on alighting from the coach,
 “ (which I presume you are resolved to
 “ come by,) you will come to us at once,
 “ and take some tea, we shall be most
 “ happy to see Mrs. Ball, yourself, and
 “ Missey. Your luggage may remain at the
 “ coach office, or be sent here, and you can,
 “ after tea, proceed to look at any apart-
 “ ments I may previously have seen, or at
 “ any others.

“ *At all events*, oblige me with a line,
 “ BY RETURN OF POST, saying what are your
 “ intended movements, as your letter, if
 “ received by me on Thursday morning, will

“ regulate some movement of *mine*, which
“ I will afterwards explain to you. The
“ weather here is truly delightful.

“ I had some thoughts of going to town
“ to-morrow, for a day or two, but certain
“ circumstances have changed that intention.

“ I am desired to present best
“ regards, &c., &c.,

“ And remain,

“ Sincerely Yours,

“ HENRY R. BISHOP.”

“ P.S. Should I be troubling you in
“ requesting you to call at Drury Lane,
“ to enquire whether Mr. Alex. Lee is in
“ town or not? Perhaps Mapleson could
“ inform you this—but I wish to know *in*
“ *your letter*,*

Wells, Somersetshire.

November 28th, 1833.

“ MY DEAR BALL,—

“ Many thanks for your alteration

* I could not go to Margate, as I had promised, on account of my various engagements, which at one time were so numerous as to detain me in town twelve years.

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"A PROFITABLE SONG."—"My Pretty Jane," or
 "The Bloom is on the Rye," written by Edward Fitzball,
 has been the most profitable song to the publishers ever
 written, it having some years ago brought £2000 a line,
 which no song of Tennyson, Byron, Moore, or any other
 poet has ever realised. Yet all the late Mr. Fitzball, the
 author, and Sir Henry Bishop, the composer, received,
 did not exceed £200. After the lapse of half a century
 this song remains as popular as ever. The way it was
 written was as follows:—Mr. Fitzball when a youth was
 in the habit of walking up one of the picturesque walled
 lanes of Burwell, a village with a fine old church, distant
 about 11 miles from Cambridge and three from Newmarket,
 in the morning, to look after his father's land. Near one
 of these lanes resided a farmer, who had an only daugh-
 ter named Jane. Sometimes as Fitzball passed the cot-
 tage this fair girl would be seen peering over a pretty,
 clean and white blind, only her nose, eyes, forehead,
 ears, and hair visible, which were of surpassing loveli-
 ness. She would nod or look at him as he passed with
 artless simplicity. On one of these occasions he sat
 down in one of his father's field's, just at the time when
 the "bloom is on the rye," and wrote that never-dying
 song, "My Pretty Jane," which he says took him about
 ten minutes to write. The song was kept for two years
 among his other juvenile efforts, until his residence in
 London, when, being engaged to write a song for the
 Vauxhall Gardens, he produced it—first handing it to
 Sir Henry Bishop to set to music. But it was not nearly
 being produced to the world. On the manager of the
 Gardens applying to Fitzball for the new song his answer
 was, "If pretty Jane will do it, I shall not write another."
 Sir Henry Bishop, it appears, did not always have faith
 in his own music, and had thrown the song into the waste-
 paper basket. Mr. Fitzball called on Sir Henry Bishop,
 who was out. Mr. Fitzball found his song in the waste-
 paper basket, and handed it to the manager saying, "It
 will do: I will take all the responsibility." The song
 was sung at Vauxhall by the famous tenor, Alexander
 Lea, that very night. It ran the whole season, and was
 the leading encore for many seasons. We believe Pretty
 Jane herself died of consumption in the height of her
 youth and beauty, though not until Mr. Fitzball had
 painted her likeness, which is now in possession of his
 only daughter. *HAMPSHIRE CHRONICLE - 26/12/85*

" Ever yours, truly,

" HENRY R. BISHOP."

I had the good luck also, here to make
 some veritable hits in my songs. In *My*
Dog and my gun, &c. *My Pretty Jane*,
 inimitably sung by Robinson, made quite a
 furore; and was encored every night of

the season. Sims Reeves has taken up the air, lately, and charmingly he renders it, but it ought to be sung in the open air ; under the moonlit summer trees, as at Vauxhall. It almost always happens, that which is least thought of by the inventor, is the point which tells best with the public. Bishop thought nothing of the melody of *My Pretty Jane* ; I do not believe that he would have consented to its being sung, but in a moment of necessity, when no other new song could be supplied for Robinson. Of the words, I felt there was nothing to boast ; I had, I imagined, even at the gardens, written so many better, which were scarcely noticed. Yet, notwithstanding all these forebodings, and want of self-confidence, that melody, and those words, have never been lost sight of by the public, for *twenty* years. I was absolutely assured, not long since, that five hundred pounds had been refused for their undivided copyright. The unaffected simplicity of the words, may give some idea of how little

difficulty there is, *sometimes*, in pleasing the public, if one always knew the way how to accomplish it.

Ballad.

My pretty Jane ! My dearest Jane !
 Ah, never look so shy ;
 But meet me in the evening,
 When the bloom is on the rye :
 The summer nights are coming, love,
 The corn is in the ear—
 The nightingale is singing, love,
 The moon shines bright and clear
 Then Pretty Jane ! My dearest Jane &c.

Oh ! name the day, the wedding day,
 And I will buy the ring :*
 The Bridal Maids in garlands gay—
 And village bells shall ring.
 Then pretty Jane, my dearest Jane,
 Ah, never look so shy :
 But meet me in the evening,
 When the bloom is on the rye.

Templeton was with us also ; his fine clear, bell-like voice told wonderfully. And the Scotch ballad I wrote for him, " Mine ain hame," could not have been better

* George Lindley, the poet, was the first to point out a little oversight here, in making ring rhyme with ring. It is a defect ; but I prefer giving the song as it was sung. In my published work, the *House to Let*, and other poems and ballads, I have corrected it.

given by Rubini himself, admitting that Rubini could have sung a ballad at all, especially a Scotch one. Then there was sweet Kitty Tunstall, with her merry song about "Isn't it a pity!" That *was* ballad singing, *real* ballad singing.

Nor was this all; a simple trio, called "Here's a health to the King and the Queen," which I wrote in the opening of the foregoing Vaudeville, became quite popular; while, as is often the case, a much more important, and *cumbrous* compliment to royalty, proved quite a failure.

But sunny as this narrative appears, let it not be imagined that I had no spots in my sunshine; I frequently got assailed by reviewers, especially in the Sunday papers, and a paper, called the Figaro, from the effects of which I suffered greatly, and but for the approval of the public, should have believed myself all they said I was; ignorant, stupid, an ass.

One day, a short time since, a little piece of justice was done me, in this respect; I

called in at a popular composer's to speak about the words of a song which I had been requested to write for Jenny Lind, when, seeing on the piano, an oil painting of a Zingara, or gipsy, I was greatly impressed by its charms, colour, tone, and beauty; and as I am very enthusiastic in my admiration of works of genius, I did not spare the commendations I felt to be so amply deserved.

"This is the artist!" exclaimed the composer, turning round and introducing a stranger, whom, till then, I had not perceived. "He is going to Australia!"

"Australia! Is it possible? Leave England, the patron of all the arts, with *such* talent?" I remarked with surprise, without wishing to be impertinently complimentary.

He gazed at me with a mingled air of satisfaction and remorse. "I am not fortunate in *my* undertakings," he said. "More fortunate in painting, perhaps, than in any other pursuit, because my abilities, as a

painter, borrow more largely from that from which *you* borrow everything, and to which alone you owe your popularity ”

“ And pray what may that be ? ” I somewhat confusedly inquired, not in the least comprehending him.

“ *Nature !* ” was the reply.

My friend of the piano looked with delighted surprise and approval on the speaker, who paid me so refined a compliment. For me, I felt that it was, I could not tell for what end, a piece of flattery. He would not allow me to interrupt him.

“ I wrote formerly,” he continued, “ for the stage : I wrote for the *papers* : I never succeeded by the stage, while you always succeeded. I could have abused—injured you, probably : they, the others, did—the *disappointed* authors. It was *their* consolation.”

“ You never did me an injustice, of that kind, I feel quite *certain*,” I interrupted.

“ No ; you judge me rightly, believe me—I did *not*. And it was after a highly-

deserved reception conferred on one of your operas, that I sat myself down with several of my colleagues in question, and we mutually put the question—How is it that this *fellow*, with so small a modicum of brains, so invariably pleases? We sifted your words—we burlesqued your speeches—we analysed your plot—we mooted your whole libretto stupid; and yet, lastly, came to the discovery of your great secret, which all present, even those who loved you least, still liberally allowed—it was NATURE. Do not ask of me, after this conclusion, what critiques *were written*, even on this very occasion. It will gratify you, I hope, to learn, on that, and many *such occasions*, what was *thought*."

And who does not believe that it is much easier to abuse a bad play than to write a better?

I am happy to say, however, in this era a more liberal set of men write for the papers: *gentlemen* who have reputations to compromise. I know many of them, and

highly respect them and their opinions. At the same time, I do not assert this because I wish on any occasion to mitigate their remarks; while I acknowledge my vanity in asserting that I do not recollect ever having requested a *single* favour of any public writer in my life—*nor do I ever intend it*. A public man is public property; so are his works. I offer it, however, as the conviction, (of an individual only,) that all critiques on *public* works, ought to bear *publicly* the name of the reviewer.

In October, 1830, I find myself again at the Adelphi, bringing out a new, and exceedingly *original* spectacle, called by the astounding appellation of *The Black Vulture*; in other words, the Ixion of the ancients. It met with an excellent reception. O. Smith was the *Vulture*!! And well might he say to me, on that, or some other occasion, that he had determined to sell his hoofs, horns, and tail, and play the devil no longer. He did so, I believe, and tried on the *owld* legitimate. Most excel-

lent was he in it ; yet, lately, I saw him perform something at the Haymarket very Mephistopholish in the " Devil's Violin," where, in enumerating the imps and demons of a catalogue of friends, he talked something about Belphegor, Zamiel, and O. Smith, as if he had tadpoled back into the actual demon, and as Matthews would have said " rekiver arms ! " When one sees O. Smith enacting a legitimate part, one thinks it would amount to profanation to transform him again into that of a demon : yet, when one witnesses his assumption of the demon, one thinks that such a *devilish* good demon ought never more to step back into frail humanity. Since this was written poor O. Smith is no more. Like one of the rich, many-coloured leaves of the sunset of the old drama, he has fallen off with many others of his time, whose places are very ill-supplied by the monotonous tint of the young spring leaves which I have seen yet ensue.

August 4th, 1831. I wrote the libretta of a new original opera called the "Sorceress," composed by Ferdinand Ries, and produced under the management of Mr. Arnold, whose company played at the Adelphi, (their own theatre having been unfortunately consumed by fire.) This opera had originally been a melodrame, founded on some German tale, called "*Black Naddock*." I dramatised it for Elliston, who wrote me the following quaint note in returning the M.S., by which you will perceive I, in my turn, had my pieces returned, like other people—

" June 15th, 1830.

" MY DEAR SIR,—

" I have perused your drama entitled
" 'Black Naddock,' and think it decidedly
" one of your best pieces. I have not
" time, however, now to devote to its scenery;
" but if you should not have disposed of it

“ before September, I shall be very much
“ inclined to produce it.

“ Believe me, dear Sir,

“ In all good wishes,

“ Yours truly,

“ R. W. ELLISTON.

“ To E. Fitzball.”

This opera was too heavy, and too Germanic, and required, above all things, *melody*, without which, no opera can ever succeed, whatever merit *else* it may possess. This season, also, I renewed my engagement at Vauxhall. Mr. and Mrs. Keely were with us for the vaudevilles. We produced the “Bottle of Champagne,” with Bishop’s music, in which Mrs. Keely was, as she always is in everything she undertakes, most excellent. A very laughable piece was also brought out, called “The Phillip on the Nose,” wherein Keely electrified the audience. It surprises me that I have not seen this burletta played elsewhere. Not only Keely, but Mrs. Keely charmed every-

body by her *naïve*, sprightly, and natural acting, and her ballad singing. It was curious that we should meet thus in after years: I was once on a visit at Mrs. Cobbold's at Holy Wells; there was a large party, and a *protégé* of Mrs. Cobbold—a most extraordinary and gifted child was to play the harp. Everybody was in the drawing room; the servants all running here and there to wait upon the guests; when happening to cross a passage, I saw a little child, with eyes refulgent with intelligence, trying to lift a harp nearly three times taller than herself, with all the intention of a giant, and carry it into the drawing-room. Of course, the attempt was fruitless, and I, much amused, gladly executed the task for her. I never saw that interesting child again, till, one evening, she recognised me in the green room of Covent Garden. It was the already popular Miss Goddard—my fairy of the harp: now the inimitable Mrs. Keeley.

Amongst the numerous attractions pre-

sented at the gardens this season, were some curious optical illusions. You saw a basket of fruit, which *retreated* as you *advanced* to touch it. Through a telescope you looked at a *dead* wall, and beheld a *living* person, who was nowhere else to be seen! These remarkable novelties were introduced by young Frederick Gye, whose early taste in ornamenting the gardens gave that immense promise, since so amply realised in his indescribable decorations of Drury Lane, both at the promenade concerts and bal masques, to say nothing of the style of perfection which he contrives to throw over everything connected with his management of the Italian Opera, Covent Garden Theatre.

During all these excitements, I had lost both my brother and my mother. He died first; my mother, who was far advanced in years, did not long survive him.

On the occasion of my mothers funeral, I returned once again to the old village. I could scarcely bring myself to believe that

the houses had not grown much smaller!—that the neighbourhood had not become less. All seemed so unlike the picture I had carried away in my heart. The charm of the place was gone. I scarcely knew my favourite haunts, and marvelled that I had once considered them so lovely. And so it is: past things measured by years of regret, when approached in after melt, like the rainbow, it may be, into tears.

One thing amused me during my stay. As a matter of curiosity, they showed me, at Burwell, a small statue resembling the Virgin, carved in an ancient wall, which *they* said had been recently discovered, and proved, *beyond a doubt*, that this wall had formerly been part of either a nunnery or a chapel. It might have been, so far as regarded the wall, but for the *Virgin*, she remained as a specimen of my *own* handy-work when I was a lad. So you see how your antiquarians may be misled or bewildered. There is an old cave, at Royston, in Herefordshire, which you are par-

mitted, for a trifle, to descend, by a private entrance, there being no other, through a house. In this gloomy retreat, it seems, a lady hermitess lived in the days of Thomas à Becket. She died in this cave; her tomb is there, with her effigy above it. It was an imitation of this effigy, cut by me in the wall, which was now mistaken for the Virgin of the supposed chapel.

It was about this period that I first became acquainted with *the* Miss Kelly—that inimitable child of nature. She first acted for me in a melodrame called the “Soldier’s Widow; or, the Deserted Mill”—the music by Barnett*—at the Adelphi, (still occupied by the English Opera company.) Of course Fanny represented the Soldier’s Widow, and Perkins her reprobate lover.†

* Composer of the *Mountain Sylph*.

† It appears by my diary that Planché was acting manager. One day he was unable or not disposed to attend a rehearsal. Mr. Perkins and Miss Kelly rated him for this, to which Planché, with great shrewdness, not unmixed with satire, replied—“I suppose I have as *much* right to be ill, if *I please*, as other people.” Alluding, no doubt, to the frequent plea of illness made an excuse as by Perkins and Miss Kelly for not attending rehearsals.

But, at night, as the latter part created more sensation than the former, it was not difficult to perceive that my heroine was *disappointed* ; and, as she had an immense and deserved interest with the manager, the piece died a natural death : existing, I believe, only six or twelve nights—in fact, a *failure*. It is by no means pleasant in such cases to an author. But such are our vicissitudes. There are frequently *others* to please, *more difficult* than the *public*. Neither, in a business sense, was Miss Kelly wrong in declining to play a part unsuited in the experiment, to her force : viz., which did not afford her sufficient opportunity. It is as bad as for a singer to sing out of his voice. On Miss Kelly, at this time, depended the principal receipts of the theatre, and it was highly necessary, for the benefit and well-doing of the establishment, for attraction sake alone, that she should only be placed in such a light as to render her merits paramount with the public. I had now experienced

quite enough of theatrical *finesse* thoroughly to understand this, and was satisfied.

Strange, however, to say, a far better fate than condemnation awaited the "Soldier's Widow;" or, rather "The Deserted Mill." Wilde, who was then manager at the Queen's, and almost, as he told me himself, in a state of ruin, applied to me, (the then popular quack on such occasions,) for an *attractive* drama. In jest, and as an excuse, for I was very busy, I alluded to my late failure, "The Deserted Mill." He wished to produce it. I consented. He gave me even better terms than Mr. Arnold. The talented Mrs. Selby good-naturedly undertook the part lately sustained by Miss Kelly, and succeeded in it to a marvel. I was fortunate in the selection of Mrs. Selby, an excellent actress, and a most sensible woman. Her figure was better suited to the part than Miss Kelly's, which was too delicate; Mrs. Selby's was stately and commanding—added to which, she fought a broad sword combat with great skill and

effect. I am modest enough to acknowledge that this same combat had, perhaps, even more tendency to the prosperity of the drama than its literary merits. Be that as it may, "The Deserted Mill" made an unusual hit, ran upwards of one hundred consecutive nights, and absolutely restored the finances of the season. How fortunate for an author who can find a second theatre to vindicate himself in. I have frequently imagined that a theatre for *rejected pieces* might be more likely to succeed with the *public*. The public is seldom or ever prejudiced or wrong.

Again Miss Kelly played for me in the "Eagle's Nest," at the Olympic. It was the interesting tale of the dillosk gatherer, who rescues her child from the eagle's nest. Every one has seen the popular print on that subject. This time, also, we were equally unfortunate. Not, however, from any failure of the drama, nor of the acting, which, so far as Miss Kelly was concerned, was sublime.

It would have been quite sufficient to have immortalised her as an actress, had she never personated any other part than this poor Dillok mother. Her breathless movement, in cowering round the stage, to watch the eagle to its nest, wherein her child was supposed to have been deposited, is indescribable. It was one of those exquisite delineations of human feeling, which must be witnessed to be understood, much more described. The mother's courage, overcoming her woman's fear, at discharging the gun, after having loaded it herself, at the eagle, so as not to wound the child it carried in its talons, was another magnificent conception, magnificently executed. But these were the sort of points on which Miss Kelly's great mind fixed itself; and without *such* points she could not display the power of her vast intellectual strength, which was truly astounding and overwhelming. I wish I had the gift to do her justice. The Dillok Gatherer failed, notwithstanding, to attract. The *cholera* broke out in

London ; people were naturally terrified, or had no longer any desire to enter the doors of theatres. It was a truly awful calamity. One was almost afraid to enquire after one's friends, or acquaintance. Every face you encountered at home or in the street, wore a look of consternation and dismay ; every heart seemed agitated with a dreadful apprehension. Under these melancholy circumstances, it is not to be wondered at, that theatricals were at a low ebb ; or that solemn thoughts and prayers, to the unceasing tolling of the funeral church bell, should supersede the dramatic artificial scene of woe and imaginary grief.

I trust I shall be excused here, for paying a little tribute to worthy Davy Grove, at that time prompter for the English Opera. Poor Davy was one of the very old school ; when actors and actresses sat around a table, and performed a whole comedy, (the legitimate drama,) when the actor made a hit with a twirl of *his* cane ; and the actress with a twirl of *her* fan ; Davy had a great

horror, not of me, but of what he called my abominable introductions to the perfect upsetting of the regular business of the regular stage. In what he termed the *rational* scenes of the *rational* drama, he could sit quietly, in his stuffed chair, P.S., (something like the old Charlies, before the new police came in,) and give the word, or ring up, or down, without stirring from his seat the whole evening; take a nap at intervals, and all went well. Now, thanks to my monstrous example, there was to run about the stage the whole night; to ring up this trap, to ring down that; signals to be made, with flags, as if one were working a telegraph, and not a theatre. Of such a nature were poor Davy's lamentations over the new fangled system of ruin, as he termed it, till he retired from the stage, most respected, and I am happy to add, perfectly independent. A few verses I addressed to him on the occasion, may not be unamusing to the amusable reader; for the unamusable

as Madame de Maintenon said, it is hopeless to write.

Lines to Davy Grove, Esq., prompter, on his retirement from the stage.

So, Davy, you're going to leave us,
Your equal we never shall see ;
The parting will bitterly grieve us—
The very idea grieves me.

I know how the leaves, in the autumn,
Will fall, dearest Davy, away,
And spring-time bring plenty of others,
More green, more refreshing than they.

But where shall we look for a prompter,
So kind, so attentive as *you* ?
Your mildness, good nature, forbearance,
Oh ! how I appreciate now !

And thus 'tis with all things, heaven mend us !
So frail are we compounds of earth,
In the loss of each good the fates send us,
We only discover its worth.

Then pardon, friend Davy, I pray do,
Past follies, that gave you *such* pain ;
And set you to caper away so,
In thunder, in lightning, in rain.

E'en devils I've made o'er you hover—
In brimstone, in whirlpool, and gust :
And waves I have caused you to cover,
Not, Davy, with *water*, but *dust*.

I've been to you, troublesome, ever,
Have made you to ring, whistle, stamp,
I've put you, full oft, in a fever—
But, did I not cure your *cramp* ?

Believe me ! believe me, *friend* Davy,
Whenever you bid us good bye—
Amongst your best wishers, *dear* Davy,
You'll not find *one* truer than *I*.

EDWARD FITZBALL.

September 20th., 1830.

It has been frequently enquired why I changed my name from Ball, to Fitzball; which many have treated as an affectation. The true state of the case is: It was done from no affectation, but to oblige the publishers; the songs of a Mr. W. Ball, having so frequently been sent, in their country orders by mistake, for mine, or mine for his; it became necessary, they said, to make a more marked distinction in the names; consequently, I adopted, before that of my father, the Norman name of my *mother*.

From 1831 to 1833, as I kept no notes or diary, I cannot be responsible for *dates*. I perceive, however, there were sundry pieces, by me, produced. "The Sea Serpent," and "Robert the Devil," (in conjunction with Buckstone), at the Adelphi; as regards the

latter, at one of the rehearsals, I remember a curious circumstance took place ; a young girl, playing a resuscitated nun, in the act of being elevated, or rather, pushed up from her stone coffin, slipped through the trap, opening at her feet, to admit the rising of a second nun, but, fortunately, alighted on the shoulders of the spectre from the lower regions. This ridiculous position, absurd as it may appear, providentially saved the first girl's life, for the depth was at least twelve feet ; she must have been dashed to death.* Imagine the consternation of the two poor girls, in this ridiculous attitude, both being *masked*, and quite unable to perceive each other. It was well it was no worse. It was extraordinary that I wrote also, this season, the *poetry* for an opera, (Haynes Bayley's,) at Drury Lane, called *Der Alchymist* ; the music by Sphor, and adapted by Bishop. I wrote the words at Brighton, and being exceedingly ill at the time, never saw the

* Young Grimaldi perished by a similar accident.

opera performed ; nor attended rehearsals ;
It *failed*.

The papers condemned me as the writer of a blundering drama, which had destroyed Mr. Haynes Bayley's *beautiful* poetry. Now as this poetry, beautiful poetry as they called it in mistake, was mine, and the piece Mr. Bayley's, I could not endure the impertinence, and wrote a letter of remonstrance to the most abusive of the papers, The National Omnibus, as follows :

To the editor of the National Omnibus.

" SIR,—

" In reply to your remarks of yesterday,
" I beg leave distinctly to state, that I am
" not the *author* of Der Alchymist.

" I have the honour to be,

Sir,

" Your obedient servant,

" EDWARD FITZBALL.

March 24th, 1832.

Mark how an editor can turn round, and play the chameleon : " After all we were

“ only *half* wrong, as we have been given
“ to understand that Mr. Fitzball is the
“ author of the songs; and Mr. Haynes
“ Bayley the *perpetrator* of the *dramatic*
“ portion.” So, in fact, had this amiable
friend of mine, the editor, conceived that it
could have been possible for me, under my
circumstances, to have written the poetry
in a piece of Mr. H. Bayley’s, (which does
indeed appear strange, but he was ill, and
could not finish the piece,) he would just
as freely have abused the *poetry*, as he did
the dramatic portion of the work ; whichever
way suited his malice or his interest. But
he was rather caught in his own trap, and
exposed to the contempt which such
reviewers richly deserve. But such reviews
have long ago lost their caste ; I do hope,
for the sake of *others*, to renew it, as the
raven said, “ *never more.*”

At this period, there was a knot of these
petty authors, indulging themselves in
penny papers of abuse, against every one
that succeeded, and imagining in their own

conceit, no doubt, that nothing was so well done, but that any individual of them could have done it better; I cannot forget a droll remark made by the facetious Buckstone, about them. "I should like," he said, "to give twenty of them, each a pen, a quire of paper, and a bottle of ink; then shut them up, separately, in twenty closets, and see which would come out with an *original* piece."

Then came "Andreas Hofer" at the Surrey, for Mrs. W. West, in my mind, one of the best actresses of my time. Her voice was music; her deportment ladylike in the extreme. Mrs. West was a striking example that it is possible for a gentlewoman to be upon the stage, in all conditioned theatres, and *remain* a gentlewoman. This melodrama succeeded, but was not attractive; it was too high an attempt for the Surrey; or the Surrey was out of tune, as theatres are sometimes.

At the request of Mr. Bunn, at Drury Lane Theatre, I also adapted an opera for

De Pinna, called the "Enchanted Lute," and wrote the words of a musical ballet, the "Maid of Cashmere," (The Bayadere,) the music by Bishop, which was produced with infinite success, at the same theatre. The lovely Duverney playing the Bayadere; and an exquisite Bayadere she made. She was indeed the poetry of motion.

"The Enchanted Lute," in its original state, from its extreme length, was unactable. After I had adapted and cut it, De Pinna, who heard it re-read, expressed his astonishment, observing that it seemed to have been touched by a magician's wand; It was reduced to *such an extreme*, yet nothing taken away. It succeeded very well in representation; the music, by De Pinna, was beautiful; but it was not, after all, brought out at Drury Lane, but at Covent Garden, and given many nights, and afterwards played at the Lyceum. I forget how all this occurred; nor is it, here, of import; who the real author was, I knew not; it was Captain Polhill, from

whom I received my remuneration, when I was afterwards reader at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden; and did my utmost to place his, or rather, Mr. De Pinna's opera before the public, with those advantages which it so well deserved. I am surprised that De Pinna has never written any other known work for the stage. It makes my heart ache when I think on the *neglected* talent in *this* country, which only requires a *few* rays of sunshine to render it equal, if not superior, to that of any other land in the world. George Rodwell some time ago, made a laudable attempt to establish *something* like a national opera; and published a prospectus to that effect; but his endeavours, so zealously, and so praiseworthy set about, were seconded by professors themselves with so much apathy and supineness, and so much *selfishness*, that the outseting champion retired from the field in disgust, and the whole affair fell, from inertia, to the ground. How differently these things are abroad, where

professors cling manfully together, and like the German students, fight their own battles, and command their own victories.

It was in April 1833, that I received a visit from Mr. Osbaldiston, requesting me to write him a new melo-drama, on any subject that I might think it best to select. I reminded him, as I had previously reminded Wilde, on a like occasion, of my ill success in my recent production, *Hofer*, (to his own loss,) one of my most pains-taking productions, which failed to bring money at his own theatre, the Surrey, notwithstanding the fine acting of Mrs. W. West, the comic drolleries of Sam Vale and clever little Rogers, and the most picturesque scenery by Tomkins.

“We cannot account for these things,” was Osbaldiston’s manly and spirited reply, “notwithstanding the non-attraction of *Hofer*, which *ought* to have drawn considerably, I am quite willing to give you the same terms, (the best terms I apprehend ever given at the Surrey,) for another

drama; and the sooner you can let us have it, the better; for we are *sadly* distressed."

"And have you any subject?" I enquired nervously, (Sometimes the managers supply the subject.) "No! write whatever you will; I'll produce it." I arose, unlocked my bookcase, and looked into a volume of narratives. "Here is a name," I observed, "which strikes me. It is called,

"Jonathan Bradford."

"What is the story?"

"I know not! I never noticed even the name, till now."

"Well, the title is a good one, and there is something in a *name* after all. *Do it!* And when shall I hear of you, or *see* you, with, at least, the first act?"

"Oh! very soon!" was the usual reply, "At all events, you may rely on my *industry.*"

"I rely upon more than that, I rely upon your unfailing genius, or I should be somewhat afraid, in my present emergency,

to offer you such conditions." Osbaldiston was by no means a flatterer; and therefore, from such a matter-of-fact man, such an expression was a very high compliment; and well *worth having*.

On perusal, I found that Jonathan Bradford contained the essence of what I required, and I could draw upon my own imagination for the rest; which I determined to do. Here was a gentleman who had lost by his last speculation with me; and yet he had come openly and manfully, again, offering me the same conditions, and relying, unflinchingly upon my abilities, still to do him service. I felt all this deeply; what honourable mind could have done otherwise. I wished to repay him his loss; I wished to requite his confidence; I wished also, to re-establish my credit in a theatre, once so full of approval, yet, where my last work was received so coldly. How was all this to be accomplished? and by what magic? It was not by literature!—it was not by poetry!—it was not by mirth!—it

was not by *tears* !—all of which had been tried in Hofer.

It might be by a harmony of the whole ; with a spice or two of *original* effect, thrown in at intervals. The attempt was made ; the effort succeeded, in its result, beyond any drama I had yet presented to the public ! It was marvellous ; and in a drama all opposed to the good opinion of manager and actor. That managers should be so frequently mistaken, surprises me ; actors, generally speaking, in hearing a play read, ingeniously shut their ears to every portion of the book, saving their own parts.

Having written my drama of “Jonathan Bradford,” I took it myself to the manager, who resided at that time in Prospect Place. He was a man for whom I always considered it a great pleasure to write. He had none of that smooth double-facedness which managers in general consider it necessary to assume towards popular authors, (so disgusting to rational minds,) at the same time he did not wound the feelings of

the unpopular by a haughty, tinsel-crowned arrogance, which I have seen some assume, whose origin, if not their education, should have taught them better ; neither did he turn any author into ridicule *behind his back*, as I have seen practised within a brief space by a manager to a very respectable writer, much more talented than himself, by sticking his tongue into his cheek and winking at his servile acting manager, indicating by such elegant dumb show, that he had got rid of the "scrub" and his M.S., when perhaps that M.S. might have turned out a fortune. Such things have been followed by ruin, as these pages tend to prove, of which that gentlemanly and sapient manager was so deserving, and who, despite his own *acting*, or any actual hit, has since had sufficient time to put his tongue into his cheek and reflect in a *prison*.

The following morning, on calling in Prospect Place to learn the impression made by my new melodrame, I met Osbaldiston in the garden, the M.S. in his hand, a

cloud upon his brow. Jonathan did not meet with *his* approbation. Still he would keep the M.S. for a future occasion, as he had ordered it, pay me the terms agreed on, and I must write another piece.

Liberal as this proposal seemed, it was impossible for me to accept it. I was otherwise occupied for Mr. Arnold, at the English opera, and must attend to my engagements. There remained no alternative save and except to enact "Jonathan Bradford," which the manager, as a matter of *necessity*, eventually agreed to do. It was a great drawback to discover, as Osbaldiston already had, I fancy, that this same subject had been previously essayed at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, and fearfully failed. Of course I had anticipated nothing of this. It was a great damper even to myself. But the piece was not an expensive one to produce, and I strongly urged the attempt.

It was read in the green-room. Henry Wallack, who was to play Dan Macraisy,

quitted the green-room before its conclusion : no great compliment to the author, (although he was the author's *friend*, and played the hero "Wallace" in his *first* tragedy,) but the fact was, he was frightened, and for *me*. When it came to the four room scene, everyone stared at each other, asking mute questions with their eyes, like people who look over a game of chess, without comprehending a single move. When the reading came to a conclusion, some glided mysteriously one way, some another, as if afraid of being trapped into an opinion. Dear Mrs. West, who was cast for Ann Bradford, certainly did say to me in some consternation, as she crossed the stage—"You are an *extraordinary* writer ; I never heard anything like it. How are people to act in *FOUR rooms at once* ? I cannot understand it ; but I perceive, by your looks, that you *understand it yourself*." She, nevertheless, with great earnestness, advised Osbaldiston to rely on me.

Then came the comparing of parts ; then

the rehearsals. One part of my system was never to go near them till they had made some progress, and vented all their little grievances and annoyances on the head of the poor author. I felt it invariably did them good to allow this, and did me no harm ; because, as the work unravelled and dovetailed itself, silent conviction generally came home to them, with a palm branch for the author. From "Jonathan Bradford," however, there was no staying away. Every half hour I was sent for by a double express. They had got into a sad *muddle*, to use a Norfolk expression, and a round robin was constituted to induce Osbaldiston to insist on my leaving out this perplexing, unexampled, undramatic, unactable four-roomed scene. He urged !—I had the temerity to refuse. The argument I made use of was this : "You tell me that your theatre is in a bad state. The scanty audiences which I, myself, witness nightly, confirm the truth of your assertion. You are in a desperate, in a dying condi-

tion. You come to me as a last resource—as a doctor who is to cure you—nothing will cure you but a *desperate* remedy. Leave out the rhubarb, or the senna, or a single particle thereof, and I withdraw—must withdraw my prescription; because the remedy would then become as hopeless as the case.

“Screw but *your* courage to the sticking place, do not depend on my courage, or, in a moment of caprice, or pride, or wounded feelings, I am weak, and may give way. I *rely* upon the success of this result. I consider that *my* reputation is as much at risk as your interest. I would reclaim both. But if *you* prove not firm, my attempt is fruitless—must fall to the ground. I am simply the author—you the manager: please yourself.”

Perceiving me so much in earnest, he became very resolute to accede to my injunction; and although sad murmurings were heard, during the rehearsals in the four boxes, (the four-room scene,) where

the performers could neither see each other, nor hear each other's voices. As the night of representation approached, more than one of the actors began to unravel, and to catch a glimpse of that singular effect, and to anticipate a favourable result; though such a result as actually did ensue, was far, even from my own sanguine hopes, and much more so, I imagine, from those of the manager.

On Wednesday, June 12th, 1833, as the play bills state, was presented, (never before acted,) an entirely new, original, domestic drama, written expressly for this theatre, by the author of "The Red Rover," "Inkeeper of Abbeville," "Flying Dutchman," "Soldier's Widow," "Pilot," &c., &c., called

JONATHAN BRADFORD;

OR,

The Murder at the Roadside Inn.

The scenery by Marshall.* Music by Jolly.

This Original Drama

Is founded on *real* facts: Jonathan Brad-

* Now of Her Majesty's Theatre.

ford *actually* kept an inn on the London road to Oxford, and bore an unexceptionable character. The extraordinary affair which led to the *construction* of this drama, was the conversation of the whole kingdom. The innocent and unfortunate landlord, accused of a cruel murder, perpetrated under his very roof, and, borne down by a train of overwhelming *circumstantial evidence*, in vain pleaded not guilty. All conspired to condemn him ; his assertions were of no avail ; never was presumptive conviction more strong. There was little need of comment from the judge, in summing up the evidence, and the jury brought in the prisoner guilty without going out of the box. He was hanged ; and, he was innocent.

Jonathan Bradford . Mr. Osbaldiston.

Dan Macraisy . . Mr. H. Wallack.

Caleb . . . Mr. Vale.

Nelson . . . Mr. Rumbal.

Hayes . . . Mr. Dibdin Pitt.

Rackbottle . . . Mr. Rogers.

Bradford's Wife . . Mrs. Wm. West.

Sally . . . Miss Vincent.

The theatre had fallen, somehow, into bad repute just now, and the house was not altogether so crowded as had been anticipated. It was a *good* house, however, and "Jonathan Bradford" was represented for the first time. It was a *good* reception: not a great one. When it came to the four-roomed scene, the audience looked at each other exactly in the same fashion as the actors had done at the reading. They seemed to retire like *one* mind, an instant, within themselves, and then, as if convinced, on reflection, that there was something original to applaud, which they did not quite comprehend, from its newness to their taste, like all *English* audiences, they took the lenient side, and applauded unanimously, not vociferously; immediately on the fall of the drop, at the end of the first act, the conversation in boxes, pit, and the enormous gallery, became so general, so buzzing, evidently on the subject of what they had just witnessed, that it was almost

impossible to distinguish one single voice from the other.

Up went the drop again. All the clamour hushed in an instant—you might have heard a pin fall; till it came to the scene in the church vault, where Jonathan turns the tables upon Dan Macraisy, and rescues poor Caleb from his rascally clutches. The house then became apparently electrified Osbaldiston; who had a fine firm voice, and was an excellent declaimer, gave the speech its due effect—

Jon. Yes, monster; that Jonathan Bradford whom you would so wantonly have sacrificed: the husband of a devoted wife, the father of children, whom you would have plunged into irretrievable infamy. Heaven hath heard my prayers—heaven sent me hither seeking concealment, even in a tomb—to witness for *myself*—to avenge—to punish.

Act II., Scene 4.

I will spare myself from descanting upon the approbation conferred on this domestic drama; I will simply place before the reader a part of a second play bill, which

may speak better than a volume written by the author—

Surrey Theatre.

A N N O U N C E M E N T .

The highly interesting and effective drama of
JONATHAN BRADFORD,
Notwithstanding its having been performed
in this theatre *one hundred and twenty*
nights, will continue to be repeated without
intermission during the ensuing *months* of
October and November.

It ran 264 consecutive nights ; and was
said to have brought to the manager *eight*
thousand pounds. I never made the in-
quiry ; I only hope the report was true.

Mr. Egerton, who heard from rehearsals
what was going on at the Surrey, previously
to the production of this drama, reasoned
with me respecting the inconsistency of
seeing into four rooms at once. My argu-
ment was—it is no more inconsistent to
fancy the wall of four rooms gone, than the
wall of one. In the “School for Scandal,”
for instance, the audience are not supposed

to be seated in Joseph's apartment—they are supposed to be *gifted* with the faculty of seeing through the wall of the house, and the eyes that can penetrate one brick wall, can, doubtless, penetrate a hundred. The vast difficulty lies in harmonising your scene and characters. I contemplated, at one time, dramatising "The Devil on Two Sticks," and giving the whole street open to the audience: those who wish to forestal me in the idea, are quite welcome to try the experiment.

I shall now dismiss this subject with a few additional complimentary remarks, which gratitude dictates, to the actors. Of Osbaldiston I have already spoken, though not half so well as his acting in this character deserved. In Dan Macraisy, Henry Wallack made a most unlooked for impression. He suddenly, as the rehearsal proceeded, seemed to launch into the character, and to discover its opportunities by degrees, as a boy discovers a problem in mathematics. The low cunning which built itself upon the

exterior of an Irish gentleman—not that he had once *been*, but that he had once *seen*—was an exquisite conception of the part of Dan Macraisy: a sort of Irish Robert Macaire, but even more original, because there are infinitely fewer of such characters to imitate in real life. Where there are a thousand Robert Macaires, there would be scarcely one Dan Macraisy. The audience testified their appreciation of Wallack's performance by calling for him at the fall of the curtain night after night, which was a very unusual compliment in those days. Vale was the character itself. His cross reading the newspaper, in one of the departments of the four-roomed scene, was equal to anything ever attempted by Liston. At these words—

Cal. The Parliament will dissemble on the 21st, to take
into consideration—a young 'oman out o' place,
&c. *Act I., Scene 5.*

His natural joy, in the vault where he is spared from signing his own death warrant, was acting not to be described.

So racy—so tottering between tears and laughter, one could scarcely picture it with the pen. Poor Vale! like Yorick with all his merry jibes; he's dead now. The cocknified mirth of his lip is hushed, and the twinkling of his lustrous eyes, has lost its laughing radiance. Such is clay; peace be with him; alas, poor Yorick!

Of Mrs. West, as an actress, I have no need to repeat my sentiments; the devotion and affection which she threw into this drama, as a wife and a mother, had in them a feminine charm, as beautiful, as peculiarly her own. I do not believe any one, that witnessed her personation of Ann Bradford, would find it possible to forget her in one exclamation.

Ann. Oh, my children! my children!

What will become of them?

The expression, and her look of pale maternal despair, as she uttered the words, were a never-failing signal for universal tears; and how very often have I seen females, mothers perhaps, taken out in hysterics?

Rogers was droll by nature ; Miss Vincent was so truly pretty, and so *young*, then—and sang so sweetly, no marvel every one was pleased with her. She first appeared at the Surrey, as a precocious child, in an entertainment, written for her, by the clever Moncrief. Her first appearance in the drama, was in my “Peveril of the Peak,” when she walked on the stage, as little Sir Jeffery Hudson, out of a fiddle-case. It was on the hundredth representation of “Jonathan Bradford,” Mr. Osbaldiston gave a sumptuous *déjeuner* on the stage, to his performers, on which occasion, to my utter surprise, I was presented with a costly silver cup, bearing a highly complimentary inscription. Mrs. West, as the Melpomene of the theatre, was deputed to present the cup ; and, would it be believed, so affected, and so nervous was the amiable lady, (a public actress,) in presenting this tribute of, I do sincerely believe, the general esteem of the company, with only two or three

words to utter, that she would have fallen to the ground, had I not actually sustained her while she addressed me.

No less sensitive myself, generally, than poor Mrs. West, on stepping out of the proscenium, my great faculty of collectedness, in moments of emergency and *impulse* here, came, as it ever did, to my aid; and I, on my part, made a fine flourishing speech, full of metaphors and flowers, no doubt. Whatever it might have been, good, bad, or indifferent, I am convinced that it both pleased, and interested my auditors, mightily; I was at least astonished at the tears in many eyes, and at myself; when I ceased speaking. I could not have executed an *encore*.

The Press generally, as regarded "Jonathan Bradford," was liberal. Some of my old night-mares still haunted me, and endeavoured to turn into ridicule the language, because it was an imitation of the blank verse of the period. The

following lines were particularly selected as a target for the shaft of satire.

Brad. Give me a kiss wife ; nay, another dearest !
Good is the wine that smacketh on the lip :
How be the bantlings ?

Ann. Well ! and both asleep.

John. I've brought lemons and nutmegs—
Sugar ; and the comfits for the children.

Act 1. Scene 1.

Those lemons, &c., were held up especially to derision, yet, strange as it may appear, this very scene was copied from actual life. I had frequently, when a boy, seen the landlord of a small public house, (the Rose,) near our estate, return from market with nutmegs and lemons, which, indispensably, country publicans go to the market towns to purchase, for the use of their customers, not being enabled to obtain, at any price, such commodities in a village ; at the period of this drama, be it recollected, punch being the prevailing tip-top beverage in a rural inn. And I do trust, if any of those kind old friends *be still* in existence, who were then so anxiously watchful, with their tender

mercies, over my inconsistencies, that they will, by this little explanation, perceive I was not altogether so utterly unmindful, even in my days of inexperience, of holding the mirror up to truthful authority, as their almost *parental* caution, rebuke, and vigilance led them to apprehend. But I owe to those Messieurs, perhaps, more gratitude than I then imagined. It is good to be abused sometimes ; I have known an author of celebrity write against himself ! How my preserving critics would have spared such an author such a self-infliction. Abuse does good in certain cases, if well done. On the occasion of the production of " Frankenstein," it was resorted to ; it was asserted in print, by the parties themselves, that no well-thinking person should witness so immoral a piece. The consequence was, the houses were crammed to suffocation ! Nothing injures an author, especially a dramatic author, so materially, as *luke-warm praise*. For my own part, I

should prefer the most extravagant abuse ; then, indeed, one might hope for vindication through the sympathy of the public ; which, on the contrary, is too apt to *let well alone*. But, luke-warm praise is, like the upas tree, under the consoling shade whereof a man goes, complacently with himself, to sleep, and *dies*. The Atlas called "Jonathan Bradford" "a fine drama."

The different managers were all astir about this "*fine drama*," in other and more applicable phraseology, money drawing drama. Every one said it would have suited his theatre ; meaning the receipts : that I never sent them such pieces, all reiterated. At Covent Garden they would have settled on me an annuity for life, had I brought it to them. Even Morris, at the Haymarket, to suit whose old-fashioned taste, I had tried every effort in vain, told me, one hot day, as he met me in Piccadilly, that if I had only brought him "Jonathan Bradford," he would have made my *fortune*. The reader has now to judge for himself,

how almost impossible it would have been, to have offered this drama to any theatre, save the one for which it was written ; or suppose that I had offered it to Covent Garden, or the Haymarket, it would have been placed, not even half read, on the shelf, the manager neither understanding, nor troubling himself to understand it, or have coldly returned it, very properly, I think, (especially from the Haymarket,) on reading the title, the *Murder at the Roadside Inn*, with,

“ Mr. Morris presents his compliments
“ to Mr. Fitzball, and regrets that the en-
“ closed M.S. is by *no means* suited to the
“ interest of *his* theatre.

“ Theatre Royal Haymarket, &c.”

“ P.S. Could Mr. Fitzball favour Mr.
“ Morris with the address of Mr. Lunn, or
“ Mr. Douglas Jerrold : bearer waits.”

The truth is, that “ Jonathan Bradford” was only suited to the place where it was brought out, and for which it was *manu-
factured* ; and would never have been pro-

duced in any regular theatre whatever, where the actor's opinion, as is too frequently the case, is even paramount to that of the manager.

On the twelfth night of "Jonathan Bradford," H. Wallack left England, at a very short notice, taking with him a M.S. of the piece, which he produced in America, with equal success. Wallack, leaving us somewhat abruptly, to my great regret, threw us all aground; what was to be done with a part which his fine acting had rendered his own? The run of the domestic drama, at twelve nights was at an end. I despairingly suggested the idea of installing Mr. Dibdin Pitt in the vacated part of Dan Macraisy, dressing him exactly the same, and letting Wallack's name remain in the bill. It was no more than fair retaliation to ourselves; a mere Roland for Wallack's Oliver. It was done; and, so well and artiste like, did Pitt acquit himself, that at the end of the performance, he was unanimously called for, to receive

the customary honours, just the same as those conferred on the original actor, which inflated me a little, with the idea that the piece *might* have had *something* to do with its own popularity, after all.

It may appear somewhat extraordinary, that I should have dwelt, at so considerable a length, on the production of a minor drama, at a *minor* theatre. But the ensuing remarks, may, I trust, offer some extenuation. When we come to reflect that, during its immense run, *at least four hundred thousand* of the public witnessed its representation ; and that, not merely confined to the middling, or working classes, but contained, within its numbers, some thousands of the highest order of intellect and society ; we have a right to conclude, if we judge by the opinion of the million, as now it is so much the fashion, and most properly so to judge, that this play, for it was, unquestionably, legitimate, contained, without partiality or weakness, a peculiar claim to our prolonged attention, and

remark ; especially upheld, as it had been universally, by the *public* voice. Mr. Cobden would say, “ simply because it came so closely home to *English* feeling.”

Such examples of a continuous run, are not, I confess, uncommon. But, here was a dramatic work, with no wild horse, like *Mazeppa* ; no rolling ship, like the *Pilot* ; no expanding tree, of gold and emeralds, like the *Island of Jewels* ; nothing *effective* to recommend it ; no *blue fire* ; no superb costumes ; no gorgeous scenery ; no popular actor ; nothing but *natural* language, such as might have flowed from the lips of any existing personage, under similar circumstances, in *real* life ; and, yet, this *unsophisticated originality*, possessed some peculiar magic sufficient to excite the hearts of four hundred thousand approving spectators of all denominations ; and to attract, at moderate prices, in a theatre of no more than ordinary repute, after paying all expenses, at least, the sum

of *seven thousand pounds*. Nor was this all, for I have no hesitation in believing, that its extraordinary success *enabled* — induced the manager who placed it before the public, to take up eventually, as he did, the weighty sceptre of the *great* theatre royal of Europe ; the *then*, Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

The key-stone in this whole affair, as I might, properly enough, term myself, I cannot in the least divine how it was all compassed and brought to pass. I essayed my best endeavours, afterwards, on the same boards, to renovate the same success in “Walter Brand” and other pieces. Exerted, as I believed, *redoubled* my energies ; I *failed*. What conclusion, then, are we to come to ? Why, that “there is a tide in the affairs of dramas, as well as of men ; which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.” And so leave it to the speculations of the curious, in calculations, managers especially, when,

and how to catch that golden tide, and bound, at once, afloat upon its Californian waters.

The public, like the undulating waves of the ocean, is for ever changing ; yet, once moved by a powerful attraction, it is amazing how it will rush on for a long period, to the same point. Who would *profit* by theatrical speculation, should be a *practical* man, that is to say, not a play actor—not a play writer ; neither should he be in love with his principal actress, nor throw bouquets, from his private box, to his principal danseuse, during the ballet. He should be a mere, well-informed man of business, endowed with some feeling, and a sufficiency of taste to know a good drama, that is a drama likely to please the public, whether it please *himself* or *not* ; he should possess, still further, the rare faculty of restraining, not *clipping*, the wings of genius. Genius, from too much volition, is too apt to over-shoot the mark ; but if you cut its wings too closely it cannot fly at all.

If a manager make one success, let him not be disheartened at two or three successive failures, even by the same writer ; *every shock* of your theatrical galvanic battery, cannot be expected to take effect. All metropolitan theatres should have attached to them, at any price, one or two electric shocks in reserve, under the form of *practical* authors. Tom Dibdin was a practical author, but failed as a *manager* and *author* ; Reynolds was a practical author ; Morton, also ; and this latter great practical genius, frequently, received no less than a thousand pounds, richly deserved, for a single play, which his managers could well afford to pay him.

Planché is a practical author, and one of our cleverest ; a little too cautious *perhaps* ; he would braid the sunbeams, so carefully, as not to burn his fingers. In the general parlance of theatrical business a practical author means a play writer who looks beyond his steel pen, and quire of foolscap ; to the O.P. and to the P.S. It

is not *quite* essential, as our friend Dickens has it, that he should *write* for the washing tub; but it is *absolutely* necessary, that he should know there *is* such a commodity as a washing tub, in a theatre where he may be *engaged* to *write*. A practical author should be endowed with *imagination*, mingled with *common sense*. This is the GREAT VITAL alloy in which *so many* are *deficient*. With common sense, however powerful his imagination, and however exaggerated it may appear to others, he will plumb the depth of his venture, and satisfy himself to the solving of a problem in Euclid, as regards the practicability and possibility of his scenic effect, on the stage, or of any original idea emanating from his own brain; and that manager is a wise one who not only respects, but humours *such* a mind, who calculates with it, confides in it, and trails it up gently, leaf by leaf, to his own advantage. Yates was very clever at this, and had great discernment when an original idea was started to him, however

absurd it might have appeared to others ; he could extract the wheat from the chaff, and bring forth a lustre from a gem, which, in its original state, seemed almost too dull for polishing. There are many managers, I believe, who even think it unnecessary to answer the letters of unknown authors,—authors who are anxiously waiting with many a heart-burn, no doubt, to catch the first gleam of hope for their own merits. In my mind, no plea of business can excuse such neglect ; and if a manager is so clever as to do without reader or secretary, he is bound to reply to such letters *himself*, and that courteously, for his *own* sake.

I have been dramatic reader myself, in the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, and the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, some years, and the fact of remembering that I invariably answered every letter, and, with the best grace in my power, mitigated every disappointment, is to me, at this moment, an unspeakable satisfaction.

I have but these few hints to supply, as

regards attracting audiences, or as regards management. Do whatever you will, much finesse is required, only too much finesse is bad, and frequently operates like too much wine 'against ourselves. He that is too cunning for others, is, sometimes, too cunning for himself. I am an advocate for a long lease to a theatre; a GOOD, *willing* company, and *no stars*; a sensible manager; (and only a manager,) one who understands the authors and actors he employs, and knows how to place them according to their respective merits. Under such auspices, the English drama, even at a national house, might, once more, become the *fashion*. Her Gracious Majesty, also, extends towards us every prospect of patronage, in the countenance, which she accords the stage and its representatives through the performance of the state plays at the castle at Windsor. I only hope, that, shortly, some modern Shakspeare may suddenly burst upon us, and, as in the days of Elizabeth, instead of so many borrowed

plumes, viz., translations, we may have something *original* to be proud of, the *pure invention* of *English* minds, and written *originally* in the *English language*; worthy the support and approval of an *English* queen, and an English people.

The next attempt I made at the Surrey, proved, as all pieces invariably do, after a great hit, by the same author, a comparative failure. Even in worldly matters, it becomes necessary to cross the grain. This I take to be a providential equalization, which philosophically speaking, is intended to balance both good and evil. We everywhere observe it. The public judge by your foregoing productions, and if you cannot surpass yourself, you are the *cause* of your *own failure*, and, as it was not considered that I had surpassed myself in “Walter Brand; or, the Duel in the Mist,” from the Diary of a Physician, that comedy was treated as a partial failure, after “Jonathan Bradford;” exactly in the same degree as the Flying Dutchman

was esteemed a failure, after the "Pilot." No author, however successful, should produce the next drama to his own in any theatre. The only event remarkable enough to be told, as respects the production of "Walter Brand," was the excitement of the public on the *first* night. From the reputation of the last drama, they expected an *impossible* representation, and absolutely stormed the roof of the theatre—burst open the doors, and broke in at the skylights; the manager was necessarily compelled to call in the police, to keep the people *out* of his *theatre*. In the interior, all was noise, confusion, and turmoil. The drama went off in dumb show; for several evenings not a word was heard, and when it was heard, the story was too refined for them. "Mary Glastonbury," a succeeding melo-drama, met with a somewhat better fate; but she again proved too romantic and poetical.* "Esmeralda" brought

* Each of these dramas ran sixty nights; but a success of that kind, was, then, considered in *me* a failure! It does

things more to their usual level. But the reader is not to suppose these various dramatic productions were quite so speedily brought before the public, as their record is placed, by the pen, upon this paper. He is to calculate upon the beginnings and endings, the goings and comings, the hopes and misgivings, the wear and tear of the mind occurring between each, and to comprehend a recapitulation of similar facts, which, if repeated here, might bring about a sameness, uninteresting and tiresome.

On the subject of "L'Esmeralda," however, being founded on the splendid work of Victor Hugo, I think I may venture to dwell some little time, without trespassing too far on the reader's patience. My wife had lately read this charming romance in its native language. It greatly excited her feelings; she wished to read it to me, but

not bear itself out in practice, that overwrought early success is so beneficial an affair after all. Your Gladiator, who kills his dozen opponents at the *first* round, will be sneered at, if, in the second, he only exterminate ten, though no one else shall be able to kill five.

I was weary of writing, just then ; almost worn out ; weary of myself, and refused to listen. Still she persevered, without tormenting, and gently, at length, won me over. I heard bits and scraps, to the dramatic fitness of which it was impossible to remain long insensible. And *Esmeralda* was dramatised.

I almost forget who was manager at Drury Lane : was it Mr. Bunn ? No matter. I carried *Esmeralda* there ; Cooper was deputed to peruse it. It was by *no manner of means* likely to suit Cooper's taste ; and was of course disapproved, and pronounced unintelligible. On my way home, with my M.S. in my pocket, happening to call upon Yates, I told him the mortifying circumstance of Cooper's rejection of "*L'Esmeralda*." I will not, here, enter into any discussion on Yates's apprehensions as regarded the fatality of Cooper's criticisms, save to surprise the reader by asserting that they did not prevent his dis-

playing the utmost anxiety to hear “Esmeralda,” and judge for himself.

I read him the drama: he accepted it *immediately*. Himself, Mrs. Yates, Mrs. West, O. Smith, &c, &c., had entered into an engagement to perform, during a season, at the Surrey, and “Esmeralda” was exactly the sort of representation he wished to produce. Himself, Quasemoda; Mrs. Yates, Esmeralda; O. Smith, the Monk; and Mrs. Wm. West, Gudule; with dances under the direction of Oscar Byrne. Could any cast be better? None! Our terms were agreed upon; and, so far as regarded myself, in theatrical language, this was what they would have called, “lighting upon my feet again.”

April 14th, 1834. “Esmeralda” was beautifully produced. Scenery, costumes, perfect. Yates’s peculiar genius fitted him for Quasemoda. There was a refined, an intellectual pathos in the way in which he uttered—“I owed you life; you have re-

paid yourself," in fine keeping with his whole conception of that highly poetical character. Of Mrs. Yates, the charming interesting Mrs. Yates, then all the rage, she was the veritable Esmeralda. O. Smith's Monk can be well imagined by those who knew, or, alas ! now, know what a master of his art he was. But the great part to be spoken of was Mrs. Wm. West's Gudule ; it was received with a continuous burst of applause from the beginning of her scenes to their termination. I wish Victor Hugo could have seen her.

Not long after the production of "Esmeralda," Osbaldiston relinquished the Surrey Theatre, and Mr. Davage became its manager. I believe he did not at first in any way make it answer his purpose. At length he applied to me, as having written there with so much advantage to the establishment, to supply him with some novelty. I was engaged elsewhere, and could not write for him ; but offered him an *operatic* drama, already written, with Rodwell's

music, and founded on Sir Walter Scott's "Lord of the Isles," which he readily consented to bring out. The singers engaged for this purpose were Wilson, Edwin, Morley, Miss Somerville, and Miss Land. This was, according to my recollection, the *first* operatic attempt at the Surrey Theatre, and exceedingly well it answered the purpose. Rodwell's music pleased everybody. The "Bridal Ring," and "Flower of Ellerslie," especially, became quite popular airs. We have seen, since, how that audience has been taught to relish and appreciate the music, not only of our own Balfe and Wallace, but of Bellini, Meyerbeer, and Donizetti: while our first national singers have found a sanctuary on the boards of the Surrey Theatre, when the national doors were all closed against them. Wilson's sweet tenor voice, with Morley's deep bass, Miss Somerville's brilliant execution, and Miss Land's clear notes, harmonised exquisitely. We have no such good second tenor now as Edwin. "The

Lord of the Isles" ran, I believe, eighty nights—most astonishing for an opera then on that side of the water. Davage eventually, made a fortune in the Surrey Theatre. He was a man that caught at any popular chance, no matter what, so long as it served the immediate purpose of his pecuniary interests. He was a good, dry actor: in old men of blunt feelings, requiring to be well stirred up, quite at home. His veteran of a hundred years has left no competitor. Just, however, as he had realised a good fortune, although accomplished in a very few years, he was attacked by a frightful malady, which hurried him prematurely to the grave, leaving him scarcely time to enjoy even a few golden days of his affluent prosperity.

The act passed by parliament, in favour of dramatic authors, at this time, the better to enable them to meet with a remuneration equal to their labour, proved highly beneficial to me; and would have been more so, had I not previously disposed of

so many of my copyrights, to Mr. Cumberland, who claimed upon his assignments the new privilege of nightly remuneration for dramatic pieces acted, either in town or country. This event, of course, was never contemplated by the legislature, whose intention was simply to assist literary, (and too frequently necessitous,) men, not publishers. However, the case was tried with Cumberland by the Author's Society, and the judge gave it in favour of the former. (Law but not justice.) I cannot, nor ever shall admit it into my opaque brain, how it is that *Copyright* can mean right over an *original*. But as these intricacies of law are quite out of my depth, the less I dabble in them the better, and return to the thread of my narrative.

In 1835. I next brought out "Carlmilham," for Mr. Bunn, at Covent Garden Theatre, and the "Note Forger," at Drury Lane, both on the same night. There never was a more beautiful scene on any stage, than that painted by the Grieves' in "Carl-

milham." It represented a drowned crew lying at the bottom of the ocean, with their vain, ill-gotten treasures glittering around them, and the hull of their dilapidated vessel half-buried in sand.

Webster, now lessee of the Adelphi, G. Bennet, Cooper, Meadows, Brindal, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, and Miss Taylor, were the supporters of this Spectacle, which had an old crime of mine, the failing of being too romantic; and that is a very injudicious fault, where one cannot collect an audience of romancists. Farley produced it. It went smoothly; but the other *travelling*, the "Note Forger" went much better, sustained, certainly, by a more powerful cast, namely, Denvil, Ward, Frederick Vining, Harley, Miss Tree, (now Mrs. Kean,) and Mrs. Humby. As nearly all these good actors are still before the public, (with a few exceptions,) it would be obtrusive for me to make any remarks. Their merits are far beyond the humble meed of individual commendation, and my only regret is,

that they have no longer a temple worthy of their genius to minister in, but are driven about from shrine to shrine, like the wanderers of Holy Writ, to offer up their incense wherever they find a temporary resting place.

Mr. Kean, a scholar, an actor, and a gentleman, has, in the place of my friend Maddox, become lessee of the Princess's Theatre, in Oxford Street. His talent, his name, and also his high standing with the Court, especially, from his being director of the court plays before Her Majesty at Windsor, may, I hope, secure to him the best and most exalted patronage both for the sake of himself and the well-doing of the drama.

Some years have now passed since the above remarks were written, and all that I anticipated has come to pass. Shakspeare never was put upon the stage, I should say, so perfectly as by Charles Kean. His original authors have been Marston and Douglas Jerrold : I wish I could have added my own

name to the list. I never wrote anything for him except the opening of a pantomime—"Alonzo and Imogene." He paid me handsomely, and what was better, always treated me with respect, and like a gentleman. But I do not think he could do otherwise to any one.

I remember, one night, at Drury Lane, Charles Kean was playing Richard. A cat ran across the stage at the back, and the audience laughed, as they always do on such occasions. Kean said, when he came into the green-room, he distinctly saw the cat as if he had eyes *behind* him.

A similar circumstance attended him on another occasion, in the same theatre, of which, perhaps, he was unconscious. He was playing Hamlet, on coming to—

"Where's Pollonius?"

"Why, there he goes!" cries out a voice in the gallery from a lusty fellow, pointing to a lubberly boy stalking slowly across the stage, in a long white surplice; and no doubt the intelligent informant took him for the ghost of poor Ophelia's papa.

Of Mrs. Charles Kean I wish to express myself in terms of the most unqualified commendation ; not merely as to what is simply due to her as a great artist, but as a lady of the highest moral character. She is another of those bright examples to prove that a woman *may* pass through a public life, even on the stage, and travel through many lands, subject to every species of adulation, approval, temptation, and annoyance, and yet remain an honour to her sex.

Notwithstanding the *envied* good fortune which it cannot be denied I had, upon the whole, experienced in my career of dramatic authorship, there were times when a certain nausea would rise up and embitter every feeling in my heart against the profession which I had adopted.

Man never is, but always to be blessed.

In the first place, my health became very precarious. The unceasing excitement of writing *for a living*, acted forcibly upon my nervous system. I ailed every malady under heaven ; or, at least, so imagined, which

amounted almost to the same thing, so far as care and anxiety were concerned, and the spirits affected. My wife was a willing, patient martyr to all my caprices, bodily and mentally; and, of the two, was the one more to be pitied. Little excursions to Richmond, Twickenham, Brighton, and France, almost invariably connected with business, relieved occasionally these chagrins, and brought me back to town with new energies, for new campaigns: added to which, a family circumstance led to the idea that we should one day, at no very distant period, be in a much better condition—no longer dependant on the labour of the brain, which becomes dreadful *indeed* when it becomes a *necessity*.

In our family there was an elderly lady of the name of Ellison. She resided at the city of York, where she had lived an almost secluded life for many years. She was related to my father, having been formerly a Miss Ball; I cannot even now tell in what degree, I only remembered to have

heard him speak of her as his cousin Ellison, and to call himself *her heir at law*. I had seen her, when I was a child, for she came every year to visit my father at Burwell. My impression then as a boy was that she was a very ancient woman. It appears that her father, a Mr. Edward Ball, the same name as my own, had been a man of great substance at Saffron Walden, (the mayor,) and this, his only daughter, Miss Lydia Ball, was in fact a wealthy heiress. It so happened that a Mr. Ellison, one of the Ellison family of the Member for Newcastle, married this Miss Ball; and, none to his credit, spent her money and treated her very badly. He dropped down dead, however, one day in the street at York, and Mrs. Ellison remained, I do not apprehend, an inconsolable widow to the end of her days.

Now I "arise in my story." I was sadly indisposed one morning. My wife seated near me by my bed-side, when the servant came up stairs to inform us that a strange

sort of woman named Mrs. *Nelson*, had come all the way from York to see *me*. Nelson was a desirable name to enter into one's visiting list. But as I was not intimately acquainted with any of Lord Nelson's venerable family, although I resided within a few doors of them in Norwich, I did not apprehend that any of that illustrious race would give him, or herself rather, the trouble to seek me out by inquiry, much more follow me to London. While we were debating this matter, who should enter the apartment but the lady in question herself. I recognised her in an instant ; it *was* Mrs. Ellison. She was a tall, gaunt, Queen-Margaret of Anjou sort of looking woman, whose outline it would have been somewhat difficult to have expelled from the memory. With great dignity she strode up to the bed-side and kissed me, as if, like Joan of Arc, she recognised me by a sort of instinct, for I could not have been above ten or eleven years old when she last beheld me ; and then I was a smooth-faced, fair, girlish

sort of looking young gentleman. Now my face was getting somewhat red, with constantly holding my head down over the M S.S., and my cheeks required no aid from Rowland to add to their embellishment. A large basket suspended on her arm contained, as it appeared, her wardrobe ; and, taking off her bonnet and shawl, she began to make herself perfectly at home, informing us that she intended to remain with us at least a *month* ! This was agreeable. What were we to do with her ?—how amuse a being so eccentric ? The fact was, however, from long habits of solitude, she required no amusing, and in the end amused us. My wife, whose hospitality always far out-travelled her means, did everything in her power to make her guest comfortable. She became exceedingly attached to us, and especially to our little girl ; and told me that since my father's and brother's death, having no known relation nearer than myself, she had been at some trouble to discover my whereabouts, which at length she

obtained of a Mrs. Cooke, a niece of my father's, on the same line of kindred as myself. What this line of relationship might have been I never troubled myself to inquire. I certainly remembered hearing my father call himself heir-at-law to Mrs. Ellison, and my brother make the same boast, but I never even sought any information on that, nor any other right that I might have held over this lady's property ; I had too much delicacy—too much feeling ; and, although in the course of our renewed acquaintanceship she insinuated, herself, that the better part of her estates *must* be mine, I shrunk back from the slightest investigation, lest it should seem that I had other motives for the esteem, which, in the end, I really entertained for her, than those of sincerity and disinterestedness. She *felt* this—I am quite certain she did. Known as a wealthy woman, everybody paid her an obsequious adulation, for a sinister purpose. She was shrewd, and could always detect that intention, and feel disgusted with it.

I was a *young* man, independent in my feelings, and endowed with a certain talent, whereby I could always live respectably; and had it been otherwise I should have loathed in myself that meanness of all meannesses—calculating happiness by another's *death*.

At the same time, as I have already stated, the mantle of independence which might one day, (*so willingly conferred,*) have fallen upon us, supplied no unpleasant perspective, at least, as regarded my family. It was a beacon light, kindled by Mrs. Ellison; and if, in moments of storm and trouble, I turned my despairing eyes to its friendly radiance, even for a single instant, I was mortal, and for so slight a transgression surely might have been forgiven. The storm past, I forgot that rainbow light—I forgot all dependency on other's means—and, buried in new excitements, had almost forgotten the so frequently talked of heir-at-lawship itself, of which I knew about as much as I did of the Chancellor of the

Exchequer, when one day, I received a letter from a Mrs. Robinson, of York, informing me of the death of Mrs. Ellison, who had died of apoplexy, and as she, her intimate friend, had never heard her mention any *relative* save myself, the letter requested me to repair with all speed to York, to take possession of the keys of the deceased, the house, and the property.

We were truly grieved, notwithstanding the promised advantages before us, for the unhappy fate of Mrs. Ellison. (We should actually have been on a visit at her house at the time of her death, had not my daughter been suddenly taken with the measles.) I set out by the York coach with a very heavy heart—an emotion of the deepest despondency. I was always sad at leaving home, even for a single night. I suffered from home sickness, and felt sadder on this occasion, than on any former.

At York I was put into possession of everything pertaining to Mrs. Ellison, by Mrs. Robinson—a lady of high standing

and fortune—house, plate, keys, papers ; and the bankers, so far as regarded her private account, looked upon me as heir to the deceased. She was very rich. But this heir-at-lawship, so long talked of, was not to be *proved* by me. What my *father knew*, or fancied that he knew, on that subject was buried in his grave—a secret that no one, save that One who knows all secrets, could unravel. Mrs. Ellison had made no *new* will, or none could be found. The will she had made was dated *before my birth*. Her property was bequeathed there to my father, but *not* to his *heirs* ; consequently, this bubble of sparkling independence, which had risen, so uncalled for before me, burst at once into a hundred hues, and made itself air as speedily. Yet, I still firmly believe, had it been possible for the dead to have become acquainted with this painful result, that Mrs. Ellison would have felt much more regret than I. If ever she had made a new will, it was never discovered, despite of every search,

at least by those to whom she most intended good. But the impression on my mind is, that she intended to make a new will when we should visit York. My child's illness protracted the time, and her own *sudden death* put a stop to every intention in our favour. This, altogether, looks again very like a *destiny*. 'Tis past—but so it was.

Then there was an obstinate, half-childish, aged man, an executor, who took possession by the old will. Then came the Misses Ellisons, the sisters of the M.P., in their post-carriage from Newcastle, who had sundry legacies bequeathed them, and who *complimented me mightily on my family likeness to the deceased*. Then there was a beating up for the next of kin, and a Mrs. Nunn, of Saffron Walden, and a Doctor Steward were found, *aged* persons, who actually received *many* thousands of pounds each. The latter, in particular, never knew nor heard probably of Mrs. Ellison, nor she of him. It was I who recollected having heard my mother speak of him. He

might be a relative: I wrote to him to that effect. This *Rev.* Doctor Steward did, I believe, most unexpectedly receive nine thousand pounds. Yet never had he the common *humanity* to reply to my first letter, nor to a second; nor did I ever receive from these, my *near relatives*, the consideration of a single shilling, although they well knew my position, and were both of them very rich, independently of this certainly never dreamed of acquisition, and which they had only attained because it had pleased God to prolong their days. For Mrs. Ellison, I knew, alas! too well what her intentions *were*. I certainly did shed tears upon her coffin—*sincere ones*. I should say they were the only tears shed by any other relative to her memory.

While I was in the house of this late Mrs. Ellison, on looking out of the chamber window one morning, with a heavy heart, things going so contrary, and wishing in that strange place, where I knew nobody, for some kind look from an old acquaintance

to comfort me, who at that moment should open the opposite window but dear George Bartley, of Covent Garden. His face, so familiar to me in town, and always with a kind recognition upon it, like the rising sun, seemed to brighten up my heart, and to point out the way to new hopes and happier realities.

After an absence of about a week—the only week's absence I ever spent from my affectionate partner, during a marriage of many years—I was truly happy to find myself again in old Fetter Lane, and to see my dear wife, and my little anxious Louisa waiting my arrival at the coach. Our disappointments were speedily forgotten; our separation had seemed an age; and in the society of each other, we two knew how to defy every care, but sickness. Oh! the meeting of true hearts. Even in sickness, we had a charm, a spell, in our mutual love to ameliorate, to subdue affliction almost into a delight, since it offered us so materially, the opportunity of consoling each other.

In concluding this volume, an anecdote relating to the elder Kean, which I forgot in the early part of the work, I hope may not prove unacceptable to the reader here.

When Edmund Kean, in the zenith of his great fame, was starring it in Norwich, after having one night performed *Sir Giles Overreach*, he went leisurely, alone, out of the theatre, and, happening to pass some hotel, the Angel, in the Market Place, perhaps ; he walked in—nobody knew him, and calling for brandy and water, one glass after another, it grew very late, ere he bethought himself of retiring to his regular lodgings ; in fact, he bethought himself of no such whereabouts, till it so happened that some horn sounding outside, probably the mail, he imagined himself summoned to the encounter with Richmond, on Bosworth Field ; and snatching up a candlestick as a truncheon, rushed forth to seek White Surrey. Not knowing, however, the exact geography of the district, the antedeluvian windings and labyrinths of the cloud cap't castellated

antique city, he speedily found himself surrounded on all sides by all sorts of mysterious buildings, in a select place, called the Back of the Inns, for which there were very few *outs*, about as difficult for a stranger to thread, especially past midnight, as the far-famed labyrinth, yclept Rosamond's Bower; consequently, Kean became soon lost, his head being already confused, in those narrow and dense intricacies. At length, coming to the foot of an old wooden staircase, which conducted to a chamber, pertaining to the dwelling house of a very excellent and unsophisticated old widow lady, he made his way up, and by the dim light of an opposite lamp, seeing the name of Mrs. Woodhouse on the partially glazed door, began knocking with his candlestick, exclaiming at the same time, in the language of Macbeth—

Open locks,
Whoever knocks,
Mistress Woodhouse.

The poor dear old lady, (I knew her very well) living almost entirely by herself, dread-

fully alarmed at being so woke up, and hearing this unseasonable application, she being very fat, tumbled out of bed, trembling in every joint, thinking, as she afterwards said, her last hour was come, especially when, through a broken pane of the frail door, she heard such terrific words as—

Bloody, bold, and resolute.

Fortunately, this was at the back of the mansion ; the agitated old lady, more dead than alive, therefore, naturally, made her way to the front, not daring to strike a light, much more to look behind her, or make the slightest enquiry as to the untimely visit of the nocturnal intruder, lest she might encounter some long clasped knife, with its pitiless edge, ready to second the fearful accents which she had just heard :

Bloody, bold, and resolute.

Her little fat maid servant, the miniature resemblance of Mrs. Woodhouse's fat self, more alarmed, if possible, than her mistress, waddled in her wake, expecting every instant

a blade, between her, not even gauze-covered, blade bones, then swiftly as strength would permit unbolted the outer portal, and with a voice shrill enough to have cut a lemon into quarters, succeeded in waking up, not only one, but two regular Charlies, sound men and true, from their comfortable state of somnolency, who, after rubbing their eyes, and peeping cautiously into their dingy horn lanterns, repaired, not without some perturbation, to the foot of the fatal staircase, to ascertain if it was not an air drawn dagger which had presented itself, of such miraculous dimensions, to the terrified back glancing of the loquacious maid.

At the top of the staircase, under a sort of washtub penthouse, sat, now fast asleep, the appalling object of their startled enquiries. After an instant's tremulous examination, the hero of Bosworth awoke; his eyes, such eyes, nearly extinguishing the Charlies' up-lifted lanterns. The night dark and stormy, transferred his thoughts into a

new channel. He hoarsely addressed the doughty guardians of the night with—

How now, ye black and midnight hags?
What is't ye do?

“That ere’s what we’re just comed to axt you,” was the tremulous reply of the most courageous of the somewhat weird-sisterish-looking Charlies.

Kean started to his feet, flourishing the long candlestick, mistaken for a dagger, at which one poor old Charley fell down in a fit, while the valiant other, rolling from the top to the bottom of the stairs, lay there with his legs sprawled uppermost like a letter Y reversed. At length, he found courage to spring his rattle, but Kean had made his quick exit, having “first put out the light, and then—”

Assistance came, with a shutter, on which Charley one, was conveyed to the hospital; while the other described a fearful encounter, in which he gallantly worsted a nobody-knew-what, with two globes of fire for optics;

but the little maid came to the conclusion, that it could not have been the devil, as he strongly advised her to "go to a nunnery."

Alas ! I have just heard of the death of poor, dear, merry Harley, who though a man of many years, was still as green and buoyant, both in body and mind, as a youth of nineteen ; and, to see him on the stage, to the last, a stranger might well have thought him such. As a faithful interpreter of Shakspeare's clowns, he has left no competitor to surpass, if equal him. (the mantle falls upon Compton.) His last appearance was in Launcelot Gobbo, the Jew's servant in the " Merchant of Venice," at the Princess's Theatre ; he had no sooner made his exit off the stage, than he was summoned by the call of death, to make his appearance in an eternal world, from whose bourne no traveller returns. Up to that fatal moment, more than seventy years of age, the health of Harley had been so invariably good, he had never been known

to require the aid of a doctor ; as his life had been a prosperous and happy one, so his end seems to have been painless, with a sweet unconsciousness.

As an actor, Harley requires no panegyric ; enough that whatever he undertook, and he was by no means fantastic in his duty, he became *the* character intended by the author. He never stood sneering at the wing, turning over his part, and imagining himself a *victim*, if another had a telling speech to utter, but, by careful study and genius, made that tell in his *own* part, which, perhaps, was never dreamt of as a feature, by the writer.

Harley was always most approachable, most amiable, and exceedingly communicative ; an upright and honourable man, a glory to his profession, a sincere friend, and right-minded adviser, invaluable as *truth* itself.

Not long ago, wishing to balance my opinion as respected a comedy, " The Widow's

Wedding," I had written, I requested Harley to read it, he did so with the most cheerful accordance. The following is his *original* reply :

" TO EDWARD FITZBALL ESQ.

" 14, Upper Gower Street,
" Bedford Square, May 15, 1856.

" DEAR FITZBALL,—

" " Jacob,' is a gem, and his ' Lucy
" love,' a right loveable partner ; both cha-
" racters are, in my mind, admirably fitted
" to the couple for whom they were ori-
" ginally designed.*

" Your Widow puzzles me ; her wedding,
" and the way it is brought about, puzzles
" me. The Prodigal, (a capital Wallack
" part, in by-gone brigand days,) puzzles
" me, and Elizabethan parlance, by Pall
" Mall promenaders, in 1787, puzzles me.

" I do not clearly see my way through
" FIVE ACTS ; would it puzzle you to com-
" press it ! It will, I fear, puzzle your

* Buckstone and Mrs. Fitzwilliam.

“ painter, upon whom you have drawn
“ largely for scenic effects.

“ I won’t apologize for the freedom I
“ have used ; for I am sure you will not
“ suspect me of any motives but those
“ which arise from regard to your talents,
“ nor need I tell the hero of a hundred
“ well-fought battles, that, in his encounter
“ with the Egyptians,* he loses no jot of his
“ honourable and well-established fame.

“ With all good wishes,

“ Very truly yours,

“ J. P. Harley.”

Not wishing to come to a conclusion with so melancholy an event as poor Harley’s death, lest I should leave a sad impression on my reader, I shall just throw in here, a somewhat comic anecdote of old Charles Incledon, related to me, recently, by a gentleman, who has been for many years, a great admirer of the stage ! Charles Incledon ; I remember seeing him once, and hearing him sing when I was a boy at

* Meaning “ Nitocris.”

school, He was very fat, with an immense white cravat, in which his chin seemed buried; he played Macheath; his costume was a blue dress coat, with gilt buttons, a white waistcoat, leather smalls, and top boots! Oh, tempora! but to the anecdote: The Theatre Royal Bury St. Edmunds, in Suffolk, was perhaps the most celebrated in the united kingdom for the attendance of the aristocracy; especially at the great fair, when lords and ladies, in those old-fashioned days on which I speak, not unfrequently had chairs placed for their accommodation on the stage, whereon they sat in the most fashionable dresses, to be as much stared at as the performers themselves, and not unfrequently shouted to, by their name and titles, from the galleries. The great night after the ball was sure to be a crowded stage, as they called it, with little room for the actors to pass in and out. "I recollect going to the Angel Inn," said my informant, "with Charles Incledon, after one

of those grand gala nights, when Incledon had been singing at the theatre, with a few congenial spirits." As usual, Charles was very much inebriated, as were not a few of the others.

In the course of their orgies, a young officer, of a yeomanry cavalry regiment, Captain C——e, was giving a glowing description of a sham fight in which he commanded, when Incledon made some cutting remark about feather-bed soldiers. This was readily construed into a personal insult by the really gallant young officer, and he and the popular singer would have come to something, anything but harmonious, but for the benign interference of Bob the waiter, who persuaded the enraged belligerents to subdue their wrath and settle, as they agreed to do, with sword or pistol, the ensuing morning. Bob in his experience, no doubt, fully believing that the following morning, as usual in such cases, the oblivious antidote, sleep, would have buried all in

eternal forgetfulness. But not so; the next morning the young cavalry officer was stirring with the lark, and although he resided at Barton, several miles off, with the impetuosity of the *Devil*, returned, by times, to the *Angel*, to demand satisfaction for the affront he had received.

Inclledon, who had quite forgotten all about the feather-bed insult, was fast asleep in *his* feather-bed, unmindful as if the affair had never occurred. Not so the captain, neither could all the celebrated oratory of Bob, the waiter, produce the slightest diminution of his determined resolution to terminate the affront with blood.

At length, after various ineffectual arguments to the contrary, Bob consented to introduce the enraged man of war to Inclledon's bed-side, which being done, finding Inclledon so wrapped in the arms of Morpheus, who, awake, had no other idol than Orpheus, he summoned him with martial voice, to be up, and buckle on his armour.

Incledon, who had been dreaming all about singing the storm, rubbed his eyes, thinking he heard the thunder peal in his ears, and began to pipe.

“Cease rude boreas, blustering railer,” when he beheld C——e, in a menacing attitude, pointing to the open door.

“Who are you? and what the devil do you want here?” cried the amazed vocalist.

“You, I want!” was the infuriated reply, “and satisfaction for the affront offered me here, at the Angel, last night.”

“Satisfaction?” reiterated Incledon, scratching his head, and striving to recollect himself, in some bewilderment.

“Satisfaction! by G——d I will have it!” cried the wrathful captain.

“So you shall,” answered Incledon, sitting up, and beginning to sing the popular song of “Black Eyed Susan,” which he executed with so much melody, grace, and feeling, that although the room had become crowded, there wasn’t a dry eye in it, not even the captain’s. When he had

ended, "There," he said, blandly, "my fine fellow, that has satisfied thousands, let it satisfy you," and putting forth his hand, it was as generously taken as offered; and the affair was ended.

Another and another yet succeeds; here I purposed coming to a *rest*, but as old Astley once said, that is an allowable thing. The story is not new, but nevertheless amusing.

Old Astley.

Old Philip Astley, a great favourite of George III., but a very ignorant old fellow, though remarkably clever as a trainer of horses, was the first manager of Astley's, which still bears his popular name.

One day during the rehearsal of a spectacle, the band suddenly came to a standstill. "Hillo!" cried Philip to the leader, "what's the matter now?" "It's a *rest*," answered the man of resin. "A *rest*?" exclaimed Philip, "I don't pay you to *rest*, I pay you to *play*, so strike up."

A chromatic passage ensued.

"What the devil do you call that?" enquired the sagacious Philip. "Are you going to give us all the stomach-ache?" "It's a chromatic passage." "A rheumatic passage? It's in your arm, I suppose, and that's why you wanted rest." "It's a passage," cried the discomfited fiddler. (It was before the days of the baton.) "Everybody must run up the passage." "The devil they must!" ejaculated the astute manager, "let them do it in the day time; if they do it at night, the public will wonder what the devil has become of them."

Rodwell used to say of me, that I was always *wrongest*, but invariably somehow came *rightest*. Perhaps, therefore, these few anecdotes may bring up the dullness of the foregoing, and a ghost story, of all things, is sure to interest, and will, no doubt, be expected of me.

heard a story related which deserves to be recorded. A young man in Edinburgh, afterwards a popular professor, being very fond of anatomising, a friend of his at one of the hospitals frequently supplied him with a *leg* or an *arm* to try his *hand* upon. On one occasion the friend wrote him a note to say, if he wished to examine the development of the brain, he could give him a black man's head for a subject. Accordingly, the future professor repaired to the hospital, and received the promised treasure wrapt up in a sheet of brown paper, with which he was hurrying away amongst the ups and downs of Edinburgh, when his foot slipped, and down rolled the head till it came against a half-opened door, where it lay, apparently grinning at the party inside, which consisted of a rascally old slave dealer on his death-bed, and an old nurse, with one or two others. Be sure the consternation was not small ; everybody hurried towards the bed, and some scrambled,

screaming up stairs. In the meantime, the young anatomist, seizing the head by the wool upon its pate, scrambled away with it as fast as he could. But to this day the story is solemnly told, and believed, of the ghostly head of the decapitated *slave* that haunted the rascally old *slave seller* in his dying moments.

I was on the point of making a pun here on this ghost story, only I am suddenly reminded by old Mathew's witticism on a man who will make a pun will pick a pocket, which is the last impression I wish these pages to make on my readers ; the more especially as puns, the best of them—mine was somewhat indifferent—are sometimes a little out of place. Poor Harley used to relate an anecdote to this effect : In proceeding to some starring engagement by the coach before the days of railroads, he happened to sit by a matter-of-fact fat farmer, hot for want of air, cramped for want of room. " Sur !" said the farmer, " can 'e tell me

which be the way to Sitenburn?" "I believe we are in the way now," observed the droll Harley, "for I find the way to *sit an' burn* is inside this confounded narrow coach."

The tail of a kite supplies to me the idea of this peculiar termination, with this slight exception—on unravelling the little pieces of paper, it is not probable you would find anything more inside than airy nothings; every one of my morceaus contains a bonbon—I can only hope they may *go off* well. Talking of travelling by coach in coach days, finally brings back to my recollection one of the ghost-like circumstances of past, for ever faded times, and this within twenty miles of Brighton, too. We changed horses at a sideway public house, where I suppose no one ever alighted. A shoe came off one of the horses, and being forced to wait during the operation of re-shoeing, we descended, as usual, to stretch our legs. My wife having a new bonnet for travelling, wished, perhaps with a little vanity, to take a peep at herself

in the looking-glass, and on enquiring for that said delusive article, was told by the landlady that they had not such a thing in the house, but they had once, and if she liked to look at herself in the *frame* she might.

“How do you find yourself?” some one enquired of Jerry Sneak Russell, called so from his unequalled personation of Jerry Sneak. “How do I find myself to-day?” ejaculated the wag, “I don’t find myself at all; I’m going to the Mansion House, where the Lord Mayor will find me.”

Once more with a very great old favourite,
Mr. Liston.

Mrs. Egerton told me a laughable story about Liston, the great Liston of immortal memory. Liston, she said, was somewhat personally conceited, and thought, innately, that both his talents and his looks were mistaken by the public. One day having to enact Mawworm in a country theatre, and finding that he had left his character

wig behind him, he sent for the only barber in the place, and gave him another wig to do up. When the man returned, he had transformed the wig into a profusion of well-macassered curls. "How is this?" cried Liston, surprised, "why have you not made the hair to fall smooth and stiffly, combed back as I directed?" "It woun't ha bin the laste *proper*," answered the barber, eyeing his work in a perfect trance of admiration! "It woun't have done no good to your countenance." "Ah," said Liston, smirking, "then *you* think that curls become me?" "Sartainly," was the not very agreeable reply, "sartainly; they *hides* your face, an' the more you combs 'em over the better."

I was going to introduce an anecdote respecting Donna Lola Montez, but I think, on second thoughts, I shall here conclude.

My next pages present me more in the light of an opera writer, with a new *dramatis personæ* around me, giving an entire turn and a fresh feature to the work;

inasmuch as, in the coming pages, you will find me almost constantly engaged in my *Theatre Royal* career—an inmate of Covent Garden and Drury Lane—one of “Her Majesty’s servants”—a writer of Grand Opera and gorgeous Tragedy—Thalia on one side, Melpomene on the other. And, thus, I respectfully ring down the curtain over the conclusion of my first volume.

END OF VOL. I.

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS
OF A
DRAMATIC AUTHOR'S LIFE.

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS
OF A
DRAMATIC AUTHOR'S LIFE.

BY
EDWARD FITZBALL, Esq.,
Edward Fitzball
AUTHOR OF

"NITOCRIS," "PILOT," "FLYING DUTCHMAN," "SIEGE OF ROCHELLE,"
"MARITANA," "MOMENTOUS QUESTION," "CROWN DIAMONDS,"
"BHANAVAR," "MICHAEL SCHWARTZ," &c., &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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1859.

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS
OF A
DRAMATIC AUTHOR'S LIFE.

CAREER AT THEATRES ROYAL.

WEARIED and worn out, as it were, with continued mental exertions, and strong excitements, somewhat disheartened by, if not disgusted with, the selfishness of managers, who were never satisfied with *me*, unless I brought them a *fortune*, instead of a drama, because I had had the fortune, or *misfortune* to have achieved such a purpose in one or more instances, for others, I fancied that it was a hardship, on the playwright, from whose brains emanated all that was good to theatres, to be walking to

and fro along the Strand, or elsewhere, while the carriages of managers nearly rolled over him. Under these mistaken, but humiliating reflections, the thought suddenly occurred to me of turning lessee myself. Why not? It was nothing more than to take a theatre, advertise in the Times, make out a good bill, and depend upon a liberal public to pay the rent, and the salaries. How *easy* all that appeared upon paper: if men, with a very slender medium of talent, could make a rapid independency, why, thought I to myself, conceitedly, should not others, with a tolerable share of intellect, do the same thing.

“On what subject are you cogitating?” enquired my wife, who had twice offered me my cup of coffee, without its being accepted. I waved my hand with an air of managerial dignity, for, like the frog in the fable, I began already to inflate myself with the vast importance of my new intention, and to fancy myself seated in my

dictatorial chair in the centre of the stage, giving my directions to the obsequious acting manager and prompter, with an air of frowning dignity and pomposity, such, not unmixed with an occasional smile of kingly condescension, as I had seen so *frequently* assumed, even at theatres royal.

“ I was thinking,” replied I, mysteriously grand, “ that I should turn manager.”

“ Manager !”

“ Yes, manager. I presume, little as you know of theatricals, that you are not unacquainted with the meaning of the word *manager*.”

“ I think I ought not to be, at all events ; but I do not consider that management would suit *you*, viz, theatrical management,” replied she, naively turning her mild eyes towards me, with a look of imploring defiance.

“ *Indeed !* And pray what do *you consider* would suit me ?” enquired I, facetiously scornful.

“ That might be as difficult to answer, as

to write a play :” smiled she. “ I certainly consider that you are too nervous, in the first place ; and secondly, have too much *feeling* for a manager.”

I softened a little, at the latter word, “ feeling,” my features became less rigid ; I took a piece of half-dissolved sugar in the spoon, from my cup, complacently allowed the same to dissolve in my mouth, to try, in my great conceit, whether, or not, sugar would melt there. She saw her vantage ground, and continued,—

“ In the first place, while you were romancing, your theatre would be losing ; and if you did not romance, your taking a theatre would never answer your purpose ; that is to say, I do not conceive it possible for a mind and disposition like yours, to carry out those two important objects, at one time. The idea of the salary day would haunt you *every* day in the week, and begin again on Sunday,—the *little* miseries of a theatre would, unceasingly, be stinging *your* heart ; you would have no peace, no rest,

no time ; your health would suffer, and, as regards depending on the attractions of anything written by yourself, your very imagination, which, of all things, requires repose and quietude, would take wing and fly away. No, no ! remain as you are, be satisfied, at least, for the present ; such every-day distresses as you *now* endure, the first ray of sunshine will disperse. But the incumbrances of theatres would be beyond your strength, bodily and mentally ; nothing would repay your anxieties. Leave then, management to the conceited managerial actor, the vain managerial author ; or, the best manager after all, the managerial speculator. The first two, at least, are repaid in self-estimation ; the latter by gains, which bring to him enjoyments only, as cold as his own calculations. Of course you are to please yourself, but, if you ask my opinion, poetry and managership, combined in one person, would bring about anything, save a happy result ; nor do I

read, or hear, that at any period, it has proved otherwise."

"I am glad that you have given me leave, however, to please myself," was the somewhat ungracious reply, "but you must allow me, also, the privilege of thinking for myself—that I understand such matters *much* better than you possibly can. *Women* are not *always* right, however weak men may be, to give into their opinions, and by so doing, not unfrequently shut the door upon fortune, who has but just set her foot upon the threshold."

"And what theatre were you thinking of taking?" enquired she, calmly.

"The *Theatre Royal, Covent Garden*, of course. It is advertised here, in the *Times*, 'to be let,' see!" shewing her the paper.

Rising, she glanced somewhat slightly at the advertisement, smiled a little satirically, I thought, although she was not greatly that way addicted, and giving me back the paper, exclaimed, "Well, *try* it," and left the room

That look, and those two monosyllables, *try it*, piqued me all day long. I felt that even my wife underrated my capabilities. I resolved to convince her to the contrary, to make her *feel*, however attached I was, that she could not exactly wind me round her finger like a thread of silk. And out of such common-place trifles as these, and such weak feelings, what startling events came to pass. It is marvellous. I wrote a proposal to the committee of Covent Garden, making them an offer for the hire of their theatre.

An early post brought me a prompt reply, stating that the committee would be happy to see me, and treat with me, if possible, on the ensuing day.

On the ensuing day, accordingly, I repaired to the theatre. The committee, consisting of Mr. Moore, Captain Forbes, Mr. Charles Kemble, and some others, including their right hand-man, the treasurer, Mr. Robinson, received me with unusual courtesy ; they accepted my tender for the theatre. But, then, there was one condition,

namely, a thousand pounds deposit, which said amount, I should have found somewhat awkward to advance. Mr. C. Kemble, who was one of the best friends I ever possessed, made a fine speech in my favour, and the thousand pounds deposit were waived. I became, in fact, by mutual consent, *lessee* of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden.

With a proud step, and an upright gait, I walked—I marvel that I walked—home from the theatre. My wife heard of my treaty with amaze, but whatever her opinion was she was prudent enough to be silent. I began to think about engagements. My first engagement was a musical director, (Rodwell.) It was my intention to produce operatic plays, melodrame, and I know not what else. Charles Kemble, Macready, Warde, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Warner; in fact, all sorts of sterling talent was to be enlisted, and employed to the best advantage, in tragedy, comedy, and farce. When fortunately, perhaps, for the theatre and the public, a severe malady attacked me, from

over excitement, no doubt, attended with the perfect prostration of my right hand, which seemed absolutely paralysed. It was a very alarming attack, and proved too plainly how very unequal my bodily faculties were to the heavy undertaking I was about to encounter. Every one foreboded a failure; I began to be of the same opinion—in fact, I had not the slightest idea, till I began to work a theatre, what care, what toil, what anxiety, working a theatre absolutely required, especially such a theatre as Covent Garden. How many older and wiser heads, (cold and calculating, too,) than mine, had made the attempt, with thousands upon thousands at command, and failed? I should have reflected, perhaps, on all this before; for, as George Barnwell says—“How wretched is the man that's wise too late.” Pride made me, however, shut my ears to the admonition. I resolved, desperately rather than manfully, to plunge, like the Roman, into the gulf, even though it swallowed me. I could not be

tempted to confess that I entertained the remotest idea of my present state of indisposition having been brought on by any mental anxiety connected with the theatre. And yet my feelings recovered a vast deal of their reaction when I received a letter from my old manager, Osbaldiston, congratulating me upon my taking the theatre, he having seen a paragraph to that effect in the papers, and wishing for a *slice* in the speculation. I wrote him word to come to me, which he did the moment he arrived in town; and instead of a slice, I offered him the whole theatre, securing to myself the position of emergency author, at a good salary, for two years. He agreed willingly to my proposal. I introduced him to the proprietors, who saw that I was exceedingly ill, although they unanimously led me to believe that I should have recovered my nervous equilibrium had I been fairly launched, and expressed their regrets at my resolution. I believe they were sincere; but I believe also that I wanted bodily strength, nerve,

and experience to have carried out so vast a design. Osbaldiston became lessee in my stead, and a splendid company he engaged for the campaign.

Oct. 19th, 1835. We opened with "Hamlet." Mr. Charles Kemble, who had but just returned from America, as Hamlet, Henry Wallack, stage manager. The first night, of course, could scarcely have proved other than a bumper; especially as the prices had been considerably reduced to meet the emergencies of the times.

I had now a golden opportunity, it is true, but a very difficult one to avail myself of. I was not a Sheridan Knowles, nor a Sir Bulwer Lytton, to write my piece and retire; mine was the position of a brick-layer, who is engaged in some vast mansion, and when a stone or a brick falls out, to run with his hod, trowel, and mortar, and fill up the gap in the best manner possible; in short, as Ducrow once remarked, and very sensibly, too—"Give Macready his bowl of *pison*, and he's done for." But Mr.

Ducrow wants his numerous etceteras, such as bridle, saddle, hoops, and flags, or he's *done for* in quite a different way. Fine acting was enough for the great authors above cited, but a little blue fire,) and to know when and where to use it,) was necessary for me; and however the ignorant of theatrical affairs may affect to sneer, without understanding the exact meaning of this expression, I beg to assure them conscientiously, that when, very frequently, a brick, even the keystone, of some great dramatic architect, has been on the verge of falling, from its own ponderous weight, to the ground, a little bit of blue fire, judiciously applied to the "sticking place," has so dried its classic mortar, as to make it remain durable and firm in its position where it remains now. In speaking thus, I do not mean, exactly, the blue light produced by the firework man at the side-scene; or, if I did, I beg leave honestly to deny its origin to myself. It is of a very ancient creation. The unenquiring are not

aware, perhaps, that the Egyptians made use of it in their divine mysteries. But the unenquiring should have enquired far enough to have discovered that it was, also, unquestionably used on the altars in the days of Holy Writ.*

* No really practical author would write merely for an effect he himself did not know how to bring to pass. I will show you the necessity for it:—When Terry had perused “The Flying Dutchman,” he said to me, in his usually caustic way—

“We accept your piece, sir, and mean to do it justice; and, added to your terms, a great risk we run as regards expense.”

“In what respect?” I inquired, with deference, of course, to a *manager*.

“What respect, sir?” reiterated he, somewhat pityingly, “In respect to the expense of the *ship*. The carpenter’s lowest calculation of cost—the very lowest—is two hundred pounds.”

“Two hundred pounds!—for what, sir?”

“Timber.”

“Timber!” almost shouted I. “Timber for a *Phantom Ship*? My dear sir, that would be an absurdity indeed.”

“Of what would you compose it?” was the evidently sarcastic reply.

“Of what it is, or rather *ought* to be; and what, instead of £200, would not cost you as many shillings.”

This was the moment of interest with the cautious manager, and again he reiterated with greater vehemence—

“But of what would you compose it, sir?”

“A shadow.”

“A shadow?” laughing incredulously.

Many curious speculations were made as to my ultimate failure or success, as a writer at the theatre Royal, emerging at once from my minor hemisphere so fully into the golden blaze, whether I should singe my waxen wings and fall to the ground at once, like poor, deluded Phæton. At the minor theatres, if I had created blue fire, (as Mr. Egerton generously said on the stage of me,) I had also, it was quite evident, created an audience of my

“ Yes. Purchase a few yards of union, (a sort of glazed calico,) darken the scene by turning off the gas, then, while your invisible chorus, *rendered invisible by the darkness*, sing their corale, draw off the flats, and Mr. Child, a gentleman that I can recommend to you, will throw, with his magic lantern, on the invisible union, a better *phantom* ship than all the ship carpenters in Woolwich Dockyard could build, with Peter the Great to assist them.”

Terry looked amazed—*convinced*. Child was sent for. The result is known. At this moment the “ Flying Dutchman ” has been acted at the least ten thousand nights ; and, but for the practical knowledge of its author, would, to all intents and purposes, have been d——d the first night. I do not know what our great legitimate dramatic speakers, Mr. D. or Mr. T., at public dinners would say on this subject, or whether they would inquire—why do such things ? I only know that my piece was saved, and that it brought thousands to the treasury, and that the

own, who seemed to follow me, a greater recommendation to a manager and his *treasurer*, sad to say, than the divinest aspirations of the most legitimate author that ever breathed. My dramas, such as they were, pleased greatly a large portion of the public, and were the fashion with something more than the middling classes. It now remained to be proved whether that public would follow me into a temple echoing with the *indefinable* and antique yelp—*legitimacy*!

best dramatic critic of our time thinks as highly of "such things" in their proper *platitude*, as he would of Shakespeare or Socrates in theirs.

In the same piece, when Mrs. Fitzwilliam had to vanish from a bank, a great consultation took place on the stage, as to the *how*? When I found no one could accomplish it, not even the *master* carpenter, I requested that worthy to cut a slit across the canvas, through which she slipped under a certain light—not blue fire—and so great and startling was the disappearance, that the people, almost in consternation, rose in the pit to look for her. And take notice that the greatest effects are always produced by the simplest means, as they are in *Nature*. The astounding effect in the tragedy of "Nitocris," so recently represented at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, (in which many supposed the living and drowned personages were not supported by the *same* actors,) was actually produced by a *single lamp*.

But I find that I must step back here a little, to bring upon my stage one of my most esteemed friends, Mr. Serle, the highly gifted dramatist, author of the "Iron Mask," and many dramatic and other works of great literary merit. Serle was a very right-minded and sincere friend. He was stage manager on the occasion of the rehearsal of several of my plays, "Walter Brand," to wit, in fact, played the part, Walter Brand, himself. He would often make remarks to me, in the most kind and gentlemanly way, about different points in my pieces, and, also, my songs. Once, for instance, respecting a line in one of the "Songs of the Birds"—

"Now I sit on a *gossamer* tree."

He wished to know what a *gossamer* tree meant. It was a local error. In the village where I was born and brought up, there grew certain poplars, the under part of whose leaves, being white, when the wind blew them upwards, it gave them the hue of the floating gossamer. For this, the

tree was called there, the *gossamer tree*—a provincialism. Serle, who is a learned man and a real poet, simply and properly wished to set me right on this error. It was too late to correct the mistake; the song is no doubt in Capulet's tomb. But I mention this to guard others, in early life, against a mistaken prejudice. The misconception entered my scared brain that he was laughing at me, and I was annoyed. On the contrary, it was the act of a *real* friend—I acknowledge it here, with gratitude. But how often in life does not inexperienced egotism surround itself with walls, against itself, to shut out the very timely supplies which else would come so timely and so profitably to its relief? And to do full justice to the sincere and kind-hearted character of my friend Serle, you shall now see the good and disinterested service he afterwards rendered me. Mr. Michael Balfe, may his shadow never grow less, had just made his appearance in England, with letters of introduction from some of his

numerous and great aristocratic admirers in Italy, to Mr. Arnold, the then lessee and manager of the English Opera, (the old theatre.) Balfe, whose early musical works had brought him, even then, on the continent, a considerable reputation, wished to compose an opera for Mr. Arnold, for England. It was Mr. Arnold's equal desire that he should do so. A poet was in request: I was the person made choice of *at the recommendation of Mr. Serle!* To Mr. Arnold I was entirely a stranger. Balfe had never heard of me, nor I of him; consequently, all the good result which accrued from this circumstance, I owed to the disinterestedness of Mr. Serle, who, it is more than probable, could have written the libretto ten times better himself.

My first interview, both with Mr. Arnold and Mr. Balfe, was in the presence of my friend Serle, in Mr. Arnold's room in the theatre. A subject for this opera was wanting; at length "*Linda de Chamouni*," was suggested—I think by Balfe. Although

I was acquainted with the work, strange to say, having read it a few days previously, with no very great relish for its beauties ; one of my systems being never to throw what is called a wet blanket over over the suggestions or fire of genius, I immediately adopted the story, rechristening it under the name of the "Siege of Rochelle." I set to work with an ardour and vigilance for which I was *then* celebrated. In a *day* or *two* the first act was complete, and Balfe hammering away, as he could hammer, at his piano-forte. Piece after piece of music flowed, like rich argosies, into the theatre ; copyists were set to work, parts distributed, the libretto read by Serle himself, with all possible effect, and, in short, everything conduced to bid fair for the production of Balfe's first English opera at the English Opera House. Who ever could have imagined that this opera would not eventually have been produced at that theatre ? Yet so it turned out. The course of a successful

new opera, or a new play, like the course of true love, never did run *smooth*.

I know not up to this moment how it all happened; but, as if by some magical transformation, I found that the new opera, like the Devil on Two Sticks, had contrived to fly *up* through the roof of the English Opera, *down* through the roof of Drury Lane Theatre, and was now transferred into the hands of Mr. Bunn, who, at that time, presided over the then fortunate destinies of the mightier edifice. Although I could not avoid a feeling of regret at what had transpired, after so much kindness, still I had no hand whatever in the change, and was certainly much bettered, in a pecuniary sense by the alteration. Mr. Bunn, always very liberal in his remunerations to authors, paid me much better than I should have experienced at the other house. So now, with my engagement at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, and my forthcoming opera at Drury Lane, I might have been said to

have been in the zenith of my glory ; or, all events, to have made a *bright beginning*.

Osbaldiston's company consisted of G. Bennet, Collins, the singer, Haines, J. Webster, Tilbury, Manvers, C. Hill, Morley, Vale, Rogers, Collet, Mrs. Wm. West, Miss Taylor, (afterwards Mrs. Walter Lacey,) Miss Turpin, (afterwards, as the pantomimists have it, Mrs. H. Wallack,) a charming singer ; then there was Mrs. Battersby, Miss Vincent, Mrs. Griffith, Miss Wrighton, and many others that I cannot recollect, with George Rodwell as our musical director : altogether an excellent working company, with Mr. Kemble at the outset, and afterwards poor Power, who opened in Rodwell's laughable farce of "Teddy the Tiler." Power was the best Irishman I ever witnessed on the stage. He was entirely divested of those vulgarities, too often adopted by the representatives of Hibernian character, and possessed the refined and happy art of making them equally droll and amusing, without resorting to such

coarse material. Mr. Kemble and Mr. Power were both stars, neither of them to shine long in our hemisphere; the latter was, unfortunately for himself, and unfortunately for his family, about to repair to America, from which, alas! he was destined never to return. As Power only played three nights in the week, *much against my entreaty to the contrary*, Osbaldiston hit upon the extraordinary expedient of putting up "Jonathan Bradford" on the off nights; thinking, no doubt, that if it had brought him a fortune in a minor theatre, from the novelty of its representation, in a major one it would bring him, if not another golden shower, a considerable acquisition to the sum already realised. Never was there a greater mistake: for, although I must be allowed to say, in my own behalf as its author, it went quite as well as it had ever done, and the audience was melted into tears by the pathetic acting of Mrs. Wm. West, and laughed as heartily as ever at the drolleries

of Vale, and Osbaldiston made his *first* appearance there, in it, being most graciously received, it was quite out of place, more especially at that peculiar period, when we were so vulnerable to the attacks of the press. Later, perhaps, it might have been better. But Osbaldiston not only fearlessly brought out this drama, but several others of a more melodramatic character, and far less pretensions, which had been represented during his management of the Surrey, giving the theatre the air of a minor theatre; although a great minor theatre was what he originally intended to make it. It was soon "York, you are wanted!" with me! I was expected to fill up the nights wherein Power did not perform, and make the receipts, which, in his absence, fell down to a very bad account, equal, if possible—if! This was a somewhat difficult task. I hit upon the expedient of bringing out a musical burletta, as we were rather best off in the vocal department, with Mr. Collins, Bannister, Manvers, Miss Turpin, and Miss

Taylor. Accordingly, I wrote "Paul Clifford," from Bulwer's popular novel; introduced into it a stage coach, and six *real* horses, determined to have a *run* of some kind, and with Rodwell's pretty melodies, the song of "Hurrah for the Road," in particular. The receipts *did actually* rise to the amount required, and sometimes better than the other nights. The papers spoke excellently of us, and *the people came*.*

I must here step over again to the rival theatre, Drury Lane, where I had absolutely to fight against myself in the production of my opera, "The Siege of Rochelle," produced, as I perceive by the printed libretto, October 29th, 1835, for although engaged,

* Produced, Oct. 28th, I suppose, for I see in the *Morning Chronicle*, dated the 29th, that there is a very long and very favourable critique on this opera, beginning as follows—

"Fitzball's new musical piece, 'Paul Clifford,' was *completely and deservedly* successful. It is almost needless to say that it is founded on Bulwer's novel, some of the most striking incidents in which are very skilfully dramatised. The songs, as regards the music, by Rodwell, are good, and what is unusual, the poetry is good. The piece was given out for repetition amid the loudest acclamations from every part of an excessively *crowded* house."

as I said before, in the hod and mortar line by Osbaldiston, I was not prohibited by my conditions from writing elsewhere, when my services were not in request at his theatre. Many and delightful were the rehearsals of this opera ; they flow back to me in sweet melodies of youthful feelings and early dramatic friends—Henry Phillips, Seguin, Wilson, Giubelli, (I never know how to spell his name; at a supper once given to Charles Kean, in the saloon of Drury Lane Theatre, I heard the toast-master pronounce it Jew-Belly,) Paul Bedford, Hallam, Miss Shirreff—charming Miss Shirreff—and pretty Fanny Healey, and the kind heroine of my earliest Covent Garden drama—“ Father and Son”—Mrs. Vining.

It was a glorious night, the first night of “ The Siege of Rochelle ”—one to wish your whole life long the first night of a new play or a new opera. The cram there was, the fashion, the delicious music, the enthusiastic applause, the double *encores*—never had I witnessed anything like it. “ Vive

le Roi," "Lo, the early beams of morning," and "When I beheld the anchor weighed," were especial marks of approbation, and had an immense sale at the publishers, then Addison and Beale, in Regent Street. The applause was so unanimous—so *really* *applause*—for, those who understand it can always tell the real approval from the *clacqueur*—no knocking behind slips by box-keepers. Under any circumstances that is a proceeding more honored in the breach than the observance. So carried away were even persons of the highest consequence by the enthusiasm created by this beautiful music, (thought by many still to be Balfe's best composition,) that people bent over, and nearly threw themselves from the side boxes, next to the orchestra, to congratulate and shake hands with the young composer. They crowned him with a wreath of flowers, and I question, amid all the numerous and brilliant successes of this great artist, (Balfe,) if he ever felt such a delighted heart as on the first night of "The Siege

of Rochelle." It ran nearly the whole season. And the first time Her present Gracious Majesty went in state to the theatre, it was to the Theatre Royal Drury Lane ; the " Siege of Rochelle " being performed by *special desire*. There is a celebrated portrait of her Majesty, by Paris, seated in the box.

Still, it would be unfair, not to state here, that, popular as this opera became, its success was greatly accelerated by being bolstered up by the splendid translation of the " Jewess," by

Mr. Planché,

as he could translate, and nobody like him. Of all the dramatic writers in my recollection, there never existed one so careful, and consequently so true in his translations, as this gentleman. He was the author of successful pieces, innumerable, amongst them, the beautiful libretto of Weber's " Oberon," in which the poetry is so sweet, it reminds you of the most exquisite expressions in the " Midsummer Night's Dream," of Shakspeare, without being, in

the least degree, a plagiarism. As a burlesque writer, also, Planché stood unrivalled, he never resorted to the mean trick of personality, so frequently adopted when the dull author has not any real wit of his own ; Planché had brilliant thoughts at his disposal, and knew how to use them, throwing them about like a shower of radiant stars. Elegance, taste, all that was refined was his ; and what was better than all, *refined* feeling.

The celebrated Moncrief used facetiously to say, from Planché's neat style of writing, that he wrote in white kid gloves. For my own part, I always seemed to entertain an idea that he lived on honey and nectar. Moncrief was a popular dramatist, mostly comic, just before my time ; he wrote occasionally for the theatres royal, but his talent was mostly devoted to the Cobourg, (now Victoria,) be it understood, at that period the Cobourg had a company of actors, superior to any, now, in London, with *the* Stanfield as scene painter. Poor Moncrief

eventually went blind, and lived for years in retirement. Amongst his numerous works, he was author of the famous "Tom and Jerry," played with such enormous success, at the Adelphi, under Rodwell's management, and turned the brains of half the Juveniles in England.

The magnificence bestowed upon the "Jewess," by Mr. Bunn, amply repaid him. In recording this magnificence, the fine acting of Miss Ellen Tree, (Mrs. C. Kean, so young, so beautiful,) and of Mr. Vandenhoff, is not to be lost sight of, as materially contributing to the extensive run of that deserving and popular spectacle.

But I must now draw in the horns of my enthusiasm, and retrace my steps into my apartment in Covent Garden Theatre, and reflect what can be done, by myself, against myself, in the rival establishment, to keep up the steam, where I am positively engaged (and well paid,) for two seasons. It has been seen, by the critique from the always kind *Chronicle*, that our houses were crowded

between the two P's, Power, and "Paul Clifford." During this lull, I wrote in the theatre, the comedy of "The Inheritance," from Miss Ferrier's celebrated novel, in which, when produced, Henry Wallack enacted, with great artistic skill, the highly drawn part of Adam Black, and Miss Taylor, Gertrude, in her best style. It was well received, but Messieurs, the reviewers, who had been crying out at the top of their voices, croaking over the house like so many rooks in a rookery, for the "Legitimate Drama," when I gave them a dose of that aforesaid commodity, seemed to think, sneering like Adam Contest, at the sight of his old wife, for whom he had sighed and groaned so long, that there was something after all, more young and stirring, in a bit of the melo-dramatic operatic, with a coach and six *real* blood horses galloping over the stage, and stopped by swell highwaymen. Power, in his turn, produced an Irish piece, written by himself, I believe, "Paddy Carey," I will not be certain of the title, as

I go by memory, having no other reference, but however it was a very droll and excellent piece, and went off remarkably well. But the fact was, whatever Power touched in Irish, turned to gold. Just to prove, as Shakspeare has it, there is "a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the ebb, leads on to fortune." When I first came to London, Power was acting the interesting young gentleman, at the Olympic. Mr. Thomas Rodwell, brother of the composer, was then proprietor of the Adelphi, and himself an author. Having written a regular batch of horrors, the name of which has utterly escaped me, he looked about for a good-looking young man, to play his sentimental hero, something in the style of Rodolphe in "Der Freschütz," and Power was prevailed upon to come over to the Adelphi and undertake it. I remember that he was dressed in blue and silver, with a vast plume of fine white feathers, and looked uncommonly genteel and handsome. But the piece was too appalling; there was a

scene in a churchyard, where the corpse of a woman rose up, lying on her side, out of a grave, which gave great offence, and the piece failed, at which, the lessee-author was so indignant that he resolved to write no more for the stage ; at least, sentimental pieces, and he kept his word—an Irish farce however, was started, I believe by the same author. Wilkinson, the celebrated Geoffrey Muffincap, who was to have played the principal part, was taken ill, and Power, willing to oblige, though not liking to tread so out of, what he imagined his line, still, that the public might not be disappointed, consented to do the best he could in the character, merely for a few nights till Wilkinson should be well enough to take it. The effect he produced was electric, convulsions of laughter and applause followed his personation. Wilkinson never was called on to supersede Power, who, from that accidental circumstance, became *the* Irishman on the stage, of his, I deeply regret to say, brief time, and the national

theatres to which he was quickly transferred, soon found the effect of his proper talent in their treasuries. I think it was to this very circumstance that I, also in my turn, stood indebted for my first introduction to the Adelphi Theatre, having been applied to, to adapt Sir Walter Scott's novel of "Waverly," for Watkins Burroughs and delightful Mrs. Waylett—Burroughs as Waverly; Mrs. Waylett as Davie Galettly; and the immortal John Reeve, Mrs. Nosebag.

When Power quitted us, friend Osbaldiston handed over to me a French drama to translate, speedily brought out under the title of the "Carmelites," in which he himself played, most excellently, Brissac, and John Webster, a very handsome young fellow, the other officer. Tilbury, Miss Turpin, and Miss Taylor and Mrs. Battersby making up the rear. This was a most excellent piece, (I speak of it in French,) I did the best I could with it, but I disliked translating, and I have thought

since, that the title was not well chosen, "Wolves in Sheep's Clothing," the literal translation, would have been much better—and Planché, the judicious Planché, would have so called it. Its reception however, was *good*, the papers spoke of it exceedingly well; Miss Taylor in particular distinguished herself, and contributed much to its success; but Mr. Osbadiston had reduced the prices of the theatre, with the commencement of his management, and the new sort of audience was not to be attracted, however much it might be pleased, by this sort of elegant production, for although the audience laughed heartily, during some sixty nights of the "Carmelites," they would have forsaken us, but for the coach and horses in "Paul Clifford," for a long time, a *drawing* favourite.

At the suggestion of Rodwell, who was one of the staff-officers of the establishment, Osbaldiston resolved to bring out the "Bronze Horse," as a melo-drama, and I was the engaged person that *must* do it. I was

very sorry for this ; I knew that Mr. Bunn was going to a great expense to perform the full opera in a *proper* shape, at Drury Lane . I revolted at what I called, an undermine of talent ; I allude to the production of the opera in its proper *musical* form. No remonstrance of mine was attended to. It came to this, that I might give up my engagement, or write the piece. It did not suit me to do the former, and as I knew that plenty of authors, without my scruples, were quite ready to step into my position, with *half* my salary, I set to work as usual, and in a very short space of time, for I was a very *fast young man*, then, the piece was written.

The "Bronze Horse," with Rodwell's music, rather than Auber's, although his was not lost sight of, made a tremendous *furor*. Collins came out wonderfully in a song, "Ah ! Maiden Mine," he was *encored* three times of a night. It is astonishing how the public are captivated by a pretty song, with a *good melody* to it, and melody is

after all, the soul of music, say what they will. Rodwell, though not a great composer, was a *first rate* melodist. Shortly after the production of this piece, I was with Mr. Bunn, at Drury Lane Theatre, on some business connected with the "Siege of Rochelle," or, the "Maid of Cashmere," both of which were mine. His opera of the "Bronze Horse," had come out and been coldly received, in consequence of having perhaps, been a little and unfairly forstalled, when Harley came into the room,

"Well," said Mr. Bunn, "what do you think of our 'Bronze Horse?'"

"Why, the fact is," replied the facetious comedian, "I think *nothing* of it."

"Nothing! How so?" asked the stately manager.

"I've not seen it."

"Perhaps you'd like to see it at Osbaldiston's."

"I *have* seen it there, and never laughed so much in all my life."

“ Perhaps you were so delighted, you’d like to see it a second time ?”

“ I have seen it a second time, last night, and laughed even more than I did the first.” Bunn looked at me, I looked like a criminal. His generous heart could not withstand it, and he himself burst forth into a loud fit of laughter.

I now remonstrated, very seriously, with Osbaldiston, against my writing *all* the pieces. In the first place, it quite prostrated my mental faculties ; in the next, it disgusted both the public, and the press, to see only the works of one man, to say nothing of the abuse of disappointed authors, who wrote the most mortifying critiques. Osbaldiston, however, only sneered at this, while his treasurer, *his* critic, as he called him, made a fair report, but, to my feelings, it was deeply distressing, and I became, in consequence, extremely ill. He always imagined that, *eventually*, I should make another wonderful hit, at Covent Garden, as I had at the Surrey, with

“Jonathan Bradford,” and therefore, when he saw that I really was overwrought, he became alarmed, in the same ratio as a man who overrides a willing steed, is afraid he should entirely break down, and be only sold to the knacker. He therefore sent for Milner, the author of the “Jew of Lubeck,” produced at Drury Lane, in the time when it was under the management of the committee, of which Lord Byron formed one, and engaged him to translate a piece, then all the rage in Paris, called “Za-ze-zi-zo-zu.”

This arrangement having been entered into, to my perfect satisfaction and relief, my brain became somewhat cooler, and I was one morning ruminating in my room, in an easy chair, at the theatre, when Osbaldiston suddenly entered; he was accustomed to come across, what then was called the Aladin bridge, at the back of the flies, and descend by a flight of stairs, into my apartment, whenever he had anything, *mostly disagreeable*, to dis-burthen his mind of.

I saw in an instant, by his look, something awkward had occurred, and exclaimed—

Your look, my Thane, is as a book,
In which men read strange matters.

The truth came out,—Milner, poor, talented Milner, in coming to the theatre, had fallen down ill, and was since dead; he had scarcely commenced the burlesque of “Za-ze-zi-zo-zu,” therefore, as it was announced for that day week, unhappy I was doomed to do it. Think of that day week, very little of the scenery painted, and not twenty lines written; indeed, not a line, as I could not adopt poor Milner's, it was too painful, and I had the greatest respect for

Mr. Milner.

He had great genius, education, and talent, which he had for some time displayed, not only at Drury Lane, but at the Cobourg, under a variety of managements; he was an excellent dramatic writer, only a little too lengthy; he had many admirers, and numerous followers, and, when writing for the Surrey with all my success there, I have

often found it very difficult to contend against the ability of Milner at the rival establishment; for in those days, be it known, a more deadly hatred did not exist between the Capulets and the Montagues, than between the Surrey and the Cobourg. I confess, even now, that I rather advocate that sort of feeling, kept within proper bounds, inasmuch as like blows upon anvil, it wonderfully brings out the sparks of genius, that is to say, the good pieces; and decidedly the public have the advantage of it.

“Za-ze-zi-zo-zu,” is written—it is a burlesque; It is, I apprehend, one amongst the *first* of the burlesques—burlesques which I *detest*, and always *shall*. It was only the great tact of Planché, and since of Mr. Brough, could have made me endure to witness them, or the great acting of Robson; I *hate* everything that tends to turn the profession, and the drama itself into ridicule; and it is only first-rate actors, and first-rate authors can be burlesqued, as the

sweetest wine becomes the sourest vinegar. *Za-ze-zi-zo-zu*, however, descended to no personalities; and I am quite modest enough to confess, displayed very little wit; it owed all its success to its peculiarities, its scenery, its music, and to its actors. Miss Romer played in it, Miss Murray, Miss Turpin, Miss Land, and a whole bevy of female beauty enough to have carried the hearts of the most stoney of audiences; added to them Thompson, and poor Bender, (lately dead) made *two* decided hits, the former as a head *cut off* with an indescribable laugh; and the latter something like a piebald tabby cat! The scenery also by Charles Marshall, the talented, produced a *novelle* effect; a city built of dominos, another of cards, and a railway, then, not only new to the stage, but to the world. A game at dominoes, was played by the characters as dominoes, in a most remarkable way, in fact, it was a very remarkable burlesque, and made a remarkable hit; nearly all the aristocracy came to see it, amongst

the rest her excellent and our then beloved Majesty QUEEN ADELAIDE. It was during the rehearsals of this burlesque that Osbaldiston, in an unusual fit of enthusiasm, unusual to a man of his philosophic temperament, always cold, determined to start off for Paris, (a determination he never fulfilled) to witness the performance of the "Za-ze-zizozu" there, and see if anything superior to our own ideas on the subject could be adopted; a custom pretty general with managers now-a-days, who, no doubt, as mere speculators, think it much wiser to purchase a drama for three francs, than to give the three hundred pounds so lately suggested to them by the papers, for the finest *original* play that ever was written; and that is one simple reason for the honour of a country which styles itself great, why a theatre ought to be established in that country, where only original productions ought to be allowed. How else are men gifted, perhaps, as Sheridan Knowles, Bulwer, or many others of great genius,

blushing unseen, languishing under a cold sun, ever to add a literary lyric glory to their country? while on the other hand, we are sneered at by our continental, dramatic allies, who believe, and not unjustly, that we have no dramatists of our own; and think, even so meanly of our translators as lately to have inserted into their plays, "the translation reserved." What *Punch* has to say on this subject, although so *laughable*, like the fools' songs to Lear, requires, by *somebody*, serious consideration. I speak this most disinterestedly, for such things can now matter little to me; I speak it for the literary credit of my country, and for the future advantage of rising original dramatists whose talent which I hope may, and I have no doubt will, shed its transcendent rays in a more palmy and balmy hemisphere than at present. Nothing would afford me, as an Englishman, greater pride and pleasure, though I might never trace a line for it, than to see before the yellow leaves of my chequered life drop off, a temple dedicated

solely to the pure effusions of national original talent. It is only what ought to be in justice to the inventive mental faculties of English authors, to the respectability of the country itself. Mr. Frederick Gye, perhaps, meditates something of this kind at his new Leviathan. There could not be a *better* man in the *right place*. With his great intellectual enduring, and enterprising mind, which I have seen develope itself from boyhood, I feel, from early experience with him, that he is *the man*; he who, from the mouldering ruins of the late theatre, (and he is the key stone of all) could build up in so astonishingly short a period, such a gigantic edifice as the new theatre in Covent Garden, is capable of anything, however great or grand; for my own part, when I went past it the other day, and seeing the pigmy-looking artificers 'mid air on the high scaffolds, I scarcely any longer wondered, during the construction of the tower of Babel, that they above forgot the language spoken be-

low. It took a king's entire reign, with all the children of Israel, as some assert, unsparingly employed, to pile up a pyramid. Covent Garden was rebuilt in the space of a few months. I do not apply this comparison to the size of the building, but to the vast difference in the time ; a few months, for Covent Garden, perhaps, half a century for a pyramid ; it is, I think, something to reflect on ; and I leave it to the learned, and the antiquarian to decide, whether to a pyramid (being composed of four inclined planes) the erection of a scaffold was even *thought of*.

Previously to, and between these dramas of mine, many others by various authors were represented ; one I perceive by

Captain Addison,

the author of " Tam o' Shanter," so popular at the other house, it was called " Sigismund Augustus," and first played for the benefit of the Polish Refugees ; then we had Selby's " Robert Macaire,"

Zampa (for Collins,) and another piece the "Fate of War."

Miss Helen Faucit

also, made her *first* appearance in the "Hunchback," which, not a few persons thought Miss Fanny Kemble, the really great original, had made exclusively her own. With this impression on the public mind, and in the same theatre too, the undertaking of Miss Helen Faucit, was rather a formidable one ; and she so young. Her acting of Julia, however, was a most exquisite performance ; and no imitation of the original ; everybody was charmed. She repeated the part many nights, with the same unequivocal success ; and notwithstanding the shoals of Julias, and "Ladies of Lyons," which constantly float before my eyes in the various bills in various theatres, Miss Helen Faucit, as a great actress, is not to be out-rivalled ; it is not the mere putting on the *fine* clothes, with her, it is the mental assumption of the

character she takes, in which she is so *fine* ; the *getting rid of herself* to be *the* person she comes on the stage to represent ; and that is the most difficult and artistic part of acting : then comes the detail—but I must not proceed thus, or my clever friend Stirling will think that I am going to set up for a teacher of acting, although, where his abilities are called in, I feel that I should have but little chance. What I mean by detail, however, is simply this : The feeling what the person *would* feel, that you represent ; or doing what the person would do, that you represent ; or *not* doing what the person could *not* do, according to the circumstances and position in education and life. This acquired, you are an actor, or an actress, *at once*, if you have the natural requisites, if not, like the old adage about the Blackamoor, your toil is hopeless. A man might as well attempt to sing without a voice. By way of making more distinct, the last observation of not

doing what the person represented could not have done, I'll give you an illustration.

I saw an actress, and a *very* talented one too, not long since, in the "Lady of Lyons," in the scene where she goes up into Claude's bed-room to pass the night, come forth in the morning, with a fine pair of long ribbon bracelets on. Now, the question is, where did she obtain those bracelets? she had neither coach, nor maid, nor box, nor even a cloak, for Claude is forced to cover her with his. It is not very likely they belonged to the poor old woman, Claude's mother, especially as they were *very fashionable* bracelets, supposing she might have worn them in her youth. It is not *very* likely the lady had brought them from Lyons in her pocket, (pockets were even then out of fashion,) or if she had done so in her abstraction and hurry to be off with a *prince*, would she, *could* she, under the disappointed state of her mortified feelings, have, for one moment in that position of

life, as I call it, thought of decorating her arms with a conspicuous pair of long Regent Street bracelets? Yet this lady was a capital actress, spoke the words well, and with great feeling. But that is not sufficient; there is an under side of character to be studied, the detail and consistency of position. I have heard of an actress, who played Lady Macbeth famously, having neither seen the tragedy acted, nor even read it. I am inclined to think that Dr. Johnson somewhere relates this story; if so, she had most probably been taught by Garrick, and therefore did no more "than was set down for her." I think the formidable little manager, although, to be sure, he played Othello in a powdered bob wig himself, would have looked still more black, on opening the drapery, to have found his Desdemona decorated for strangulation, with a plume of ostrich feathers, which, having *somewhere* or *somehow* about her, she had slipped on behind the curtain, to *die* in.

Mrs. Faucit, the mother of Miss Helen

Faucit was, in my young time, a most excellent actress, and no doubt imparted much of her experienced skill to the mind of her daughter, which contained all the fertility of genius to nurture the germ so planted within it, and bring it, like a well-cultivated, well-trained flower, to its fullest blossom. Her Juliet, (Miss Faucit's,) was a splendid impersonation, and in a play, now seldom acted, I know not why, it is one of the most dramatic on the stage, " Venice Preserved," she was perfection. In Belvidera she brought back vividly to my mind its almost faded recollections of the great, the wonderful Miss O'Neil. Of course she never could have seen her, her mother perhaps, might have given her a few hints, if so, she caught them with the inspired fervour of a fine painter, who, if he cannot entirely bring forth the sublime tint of a Raphael, still produces a picture in itself transcendent.

To resume the thread of my discourse, it seems to me that I was taking greater

cognizance of what was going on in the enemies camp than my own ; and what is a little surprising to myself is, that I kept a sort of diary of the passing events in Drury Lane, while of Covent Garden, where I was engaged, I absolutely kept none By the diary of my memory, therefore, I find that our forces in 1836 were greatly improved, inasmuch as we had at one time Charles Kemble, Macready, Vandenhoff, B. Webster, Farren, Mrs. Wm. West, Mrs. Glover, and Miss Helen Faucit With this, now *unenlistable*, troupe, Charles Kemble was taking (in a round of his favourite characters,) his final leave of the stage. Young and old alike pressed to see this brilliant light of the last century, ray by ray, go out. In succession came the " School for Scandal," " Charles Surface," " King John," " Falconbridge," " Julius Cæsar," " Marc Antony," as they will never be acted again, at all events, in my time. Only take the latter play, for instance—Brutus, Macready ; Marc Antony,

Kemble; Julius Cæsar, Bennett; and Cassius, Vandenhoff. Every succeeding play, as it was acted, seemed to me like another nail knocked into the coffin of my early, as I must gratefully call him, *benefactor*. At length, on the 23rd of December, 1836, if my memorandum be correct, was the farewell benefit of

*Mr. Charles Kemble.**

I saw him on the stage in the morning, when he remarked to me in his usually bland manner, that he hoped he should play better that night than ever. His wish was realised. He did play better than ever I saw him. It was a wonderful performance. The play was "Much Ado about Nothing;" who will ever see such another Benedict?—such another Romeo? After the fall of the curtain, while the applause (I need scarcely say of a house crowded to the ceiling,) was ringing like a burst of terrific artillery, it speedily rose again, and there

* He played some time after by command of Her Majesty, but I had not then the heart to witness his performance.

stood Kemble, pale, but firm, surrounded by not only our company, but by every respectable member of the profession in London. Forest, the great American tragedian, was also there, with Bartley and Farley, and many members of the aristocracy, whose names I have now forgotten. Charles, thanking the public, almost choaked with grief, and the actors and audience alike melted into tears. He regretted, he said, that he had not selected a more serious play for so sad an occasion—it was serious enough as it was—he thanked them for half a century of indulgence bestowed on his poor merits—paused, dried his eyes, made an effort, then proceeded with something about good wishes—paused again, bowed, as he could bow, then down came the curtain, to not, I should say, one dry eye in that dense house. I went to him soon after, in his dressing-room. I murmured something. He thanked me very, very kindly, pressing my hand most warmly, thanked me for God

knows what. For, to esteem him as I sincerely and devotedly did, was no merit of mine, but *his*. As he was before the public the prince of actors, so he was in private life the very noblest of men.

It was about this period that "La Valière," by Sir Bulwer Lytton, was produced. It was a fine play, decidedly better written, I am of opinion, than either his "Lady of Lyons," or "Richelieu," excellent, and eminently more successful as they are. But some umbrage was taken at the cross, to which La Valière clings when the King comes to drag her from the convent; although, so vacillating are the public, within a short period after, in "La Favorite," at Drury Lane, where Miss Romer, who personated the heroine, had to die at the foot of the cross, the utmost approval prevailed.* "Valière is a tragedy

* It was during the rehearsal of this piece, Mr. Bunn, observing on the stage that the cross must be put on the other side, a *clever* member of the establishment, assisting in the direction, observed sagaciously that it was not painted on the *other side*.

of the highest conception and language, both of which, I scarcely need add, were done justice to by Mr. Macready and Miss Helen Faucit, who, every time she acted, continued to become a greater favorite.

I am greatly surprised, now, the prejudice respecting the appearance of a cross on the stage is judiciously exploded, that no manager has been struck with the idea of reproducing this splendid play, the more especially considering the great reputation acquired by "Richelieu," and the "Lady of Lyons;" the latter decidedly the favourite play of the modern stage. Mr. Macready now gave all his finest specimens of acting. "Virginus," of which he was *the Virginus*, and the singular and mysterious Werner, which, since that great actor's retirement, has never, to my recollection, been represented anywhere in any *theatre*, so entirely did he render it his own. Othello, his masterpiece, came in rotation, and after that, another tragedy, "Straf-

ford," of which I shall speak more in its place.*

Mr. Macready.

Going one morning up Long Acre, on my way to the theatre, I was overtaken by Mr. Macready, of whom, I cannot tell why, except from the very humble opinion I had of myself, I always stood in a sort of awe. He was so confoundedly classic, I was always making some blunder in his presence. He was, however, very gracious, and paid me some very kind compliment on something of mine, which had been played the night before, and praise from my Lord Stanley is praise indeed. At length we approached a huge tall ladder, placed against a high scaffold, on the outside of which, without turning into the middle of the street, it was

* In the scene in "Othello," where the ambassador enjoins the black general to call back his fair wife, on the return of Desdemona, his saying—"There she is, sir, what do you want with her?" was a gem of acting whose brilliancy is not to be described. I have gone from my room in the theatre, into my box night after night, merely to witness that *morceau*.

not possible to pass. The Romans and the Greeks had their superstitions about flights of birds, peculiar birds, and so forth, and why might not I have my superstition with regard to passing under a ladder? To be sure, I could have alleged the Greek or Roman excuse, handed down to us by the Latin historians by way of mollifying the contempt of the great tragedian, at my not liking to pass under a ladder, which, as every one has heard, whether they attend to it or not, is unlucky. However, notwithstanding all these learned arguments, which passed rapidly through my mind, I could not muster up the courage to confess my weakness, and resolved, therefore, to dash manfully at my fate, as poor Don Quixote at the windmill, and combat the giant, come what might; when lo and behold, on reaching the ladder, it proved in reality like the sails of the mill to the knight of La Mancha, an imaginary Patagonian. Macready made a sudden pause, and after a moment of irresolution and re-

solution — “ Mr. Fitzball,” he said, “ you will no doubt think it a great weakness, but I entertain an insurmountable dislike to pass under a ladder. It is a failing, if it be a failing, which I have imbibed from childhood ; excuse me, therefore, if I go round !” and, suiting the action to the word, in the next instant he had glided past the outside, and you may be sure that I did not fail to imitate so *great* an example. I had frequently, very frequently, seen Macready’s countenance on the stage distorted with passion, despair, death, and softened both by emotion and love, but I never saw it look so *human* as on that human occasion. And a very human and humane man is Mr. Macready. I believe, on one instance, when others, stout-hearted men, too, looked in silent horror on, he rushed into a burning house, saved the life of a perishing child, and restored it to the arms of its almost lifeless mother. And many were the reports that reached me of his private worth and goodness to others, through

a poor copyist of the theatre,—reports that Macready knew nothing of. How is it then, it might be asked, knowing Mr. Macready's amiable character, that you did not feel quite yourself in his presence. The fact is I was always timid and uncertain about the art I practised, of which Macready was the great magician. I felt as if, with one magic word, or one wave of his potent wand, he could have dissolved, like Prospero, my castles of air into the air of which they were created. I have often felt similar feelings under the influence of other minds, but feelings divested of far less veneration, more resembling what a boy feels, be he ever so much up in his task, when the head master goes round the school with his cane behind him. They say people of genius never are satisfied with their own works. I am sure, if that is a criterion, I must possess genius, for I never was nor shall be satisfied with mine. Going back to early recollections, that emotion seemed

to have formed itself in my heart when I went with my first piece to

Mr. Smith, (the Norwich manager.)

When I first went as a child author to Mr. Hindes, of Bury St. Edmunds, I knew no sensations of this kind ; I saw in my mind's eye the effect only, not what was to lead to it ; but there comes an age when the heart's ear opens to the creak of the ice beneath our feet, and the mind *hears* its peril. It may be that brave men endure no presentiments at the *outset* of a battle ; yet, after more than thirty years study of human nature, I can scarcely bring myself to believe it ; and what battle is so trying, or so *doubtful* as the battle of a nervous author ? but to return a moment to Mr. Smith, I trembled beneath his managerial *smile* ; the cold dignity in which he crowned himself—the cold dignity which most managers absolutely find it necessary to assume to ward off impertinence or familiarity, as they assume the tyrants on the stage. I *did not* understand it, and I suffered ; I *do not* understand it,

and if displayed towards me, suffer still
 This Mr. Smith, as the reader has seen
 in my first volume, both accepted my piece,
 produced it, and played in it a part unworthy
 of his talent ; for he was not only a manager
 but an *actor* ; and although both actor and
manager himself, did not, in those palmy
 days of the drama, always take the best
 parts, whether they suited him or not,
 and leave ten times better actors to enact the
 minor characters without the spangles too,
 as Tate Wilkinson used to say : still, with
 all these sterling good points, Mr. Smith,
 on the stage, and at every interview, suc-
 cessful as I proved, kept up this frozen
 barrier, through which no loophole allowed
 the heart to leap in. I'll tell you, for it is a
 matter of fine feeling how it was ; and to
 prove to you what a piece of off-the-stage
 acting this managerial dignity amounts to,
 when real human nature thinks proper to
 assume its empire. Mr. Smith had a beau-
 tiful young daughter, highly accomplished
 also ; he never intended her for the stage ;

but at a very early age she became inspired with a love of acting, there was no resisting her inclination—it amounted to a passion. At length the father consented to her making an appearance in Norwich, at his own benefit. She played the then popular part so well chosen for her of Rebecca, in Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*; I, of course, was present, and never did I witness anything more charmingly sustained; her extreme youth, innocence, rendering the whole so pure and perfect; every heart responded in her favour with such general admiration and success, that she continued to play, alas! but for a very short period: she caught cold in dressing and undressing, I apprehend, and *died*. All eyes that had seen her act, I'm sure must have wept at the early fate of so exquisite a flower so untimely snapped in twain; but who could offer consolation to the poor heart-stricken father? who tread upon the sanctity of his anguish?—*I did*, in my sincerity, without quite understanding the delicate step I was taking. I wrote some

lines which the editor, Mr. Stevenson, did me the kindness to insert in the Norwich paper—they were to the memory of Miss Smith. I regret that the slightest recollection of them does not live in my mind, and I only revive the remembrance of their existence because they purchased for me at too cheap a rate the ever-after, and entire esteem and friendship of that excellent man, (Mr. Smith) who never in after years, came to the metropolis that he did not find my whereabouts, nor did I ever produce a piece that he did not act; and never again did I behold him clad in his mail of managership. Poetry is said by many, and wise men, too, to be a *curse* to its possessor. It may be so, but there *are* circumstances like the present, when a single drop of poetry poured into the poison cup of misery, changes it into a delicious honey, whose oblivious balm repays the renovated heart for long past years of misfortune, endurance, and regret.

Mr. Fitzharold.

As is my custom in my dramatic works to try and make my audience laugh with one eye, while they cry with the other, I will, before I continue my narrative, just relate a story as it was told to me of another member of the profession, stage-manager of the Norwich theatre, which happened not long before the event just related. Mr. Fitzharold, as he called himself, that not being his real name, had fallen overwhelmingly in love, and to cure himself of his malady, got married to a bewitching highland lassie wi' her twa bleu ee'n. For a brief period, during their honeymoon of gold, though of siller there seems to have been somewhat of a scarcity, these tender turtles dwelt as gude-man and wife, in a perfect paradise of mountain blisses, made up, of course, of ecstacies and kisses. At length, and what does not eventually become monotonous in this ugly old world, they began to find enough of each other's society as good as a feast; the young man wanted to go salmon

fishing amongst the lochs, in any loch, but *wedlock*, where he began to think he had been somewhat gudgeoned himself. Accordingly, he set out in spite of the somewhat sulky looks of Mrs. F., and remained so long on his excursions with the friends of bachelorism, Dick Bait and Bill Carp that when he returned, instead of finding his beloved Jessey, with open arms at the window, he discovered that she had gone, by way of consoling *herself* to a bagpipe dance, with an auld acquaintance, to the "Queen of Kilmarlock." Enraged, but not exasperated, the enduring husband sat himself down (he had caught nothing but a tartar) on a three legged stool—the stool of repentance, to chew, to him, the bitter, not sweet cud of matrimony. At length, fra the sweet Burn Side, arrived i' the canny morning, the lady and her auld (young) friend, and be it understood there were four ithers, lads and lasses, wi'un. Jealousy, nevertheless, that grim, green-eyed disturber of connubial happiness seemed to glide into the house at the

same moment. Mutual recriminations ensued, and, during the morning, they mutually agreed to make all up, by parting gude friends, and to hold the bond sure niver to see each ither mair. The young bridegroom puts spurs to his, (horse he had none) suppose we say to his boots, for the sake of being picturesque, and starts off for the Lord knows where : this part of our history, like the finest conceptions of our modern drama, is very much wrapt up in mystery ; and, to borrow a leaf out of the same book, a space of years takes place between the acts.

Our scene now opens with the inside of the Theatre Royal, Ipswich. A fine handsome young man, with light auburn hair, bright blue eyes, and a figure such as Mars might envy, is getting up a new piece " The Wood Demon," in which he plays the guilty, but deeply interesting knight. Mrs. Faucit, lovely as she was, is Una ; and who could possibly imagine this fine actor, and worldly-finished, Mr. Fitzharold, the pet of the pet-

ticoats, although he is married, to be no other than the absentee husband of our highland lassie of Act I. Yet, so it is; seven years have passed; he has become an actor—a most excellent one, and married again a most excellent wife, an actress, by name, her ambition never aspiring beyond the second chambermaids. Jealousy never entered her unsuspecting bosom; and when they whispered, as scandal can whisper behind the scenes, that her handsome husband was universally admired by the Belles in the boxes, she laughed under her shoulder of mutton sleeves, and only hoped it would be good for his benefit which was coming on.

We come now to a pair of *flats*. Presto! Mrs. Fitzharold's lodging. Mrs. F. is discovered, seated on a somewhat *littery* sofa, stitching spangles on a pink satin tunic, in which her handsome husband is, that evening, to astonish the natives in a new part. On a table before her are bills of the performances, an inkstand nearly empty, a number of quill pens, every one of which

would have written, perhaps, if it had been mended. Swords, rapiers, and tattered play-books, with a variety of what are called written-out parts, well thumbed, and King Lear's crown in a glass bookcase, nearly fill up the detail of the not extensive apartment. From a small tin Dutch oven, before the fire, issues a savoury odour, delicious to hungry stomachs, containing a rump steak, on which Mrs. F. frequently turns one watchful eye, for she is peculiar in turning her eyes two different ways at once, while with the other she matches and compares the spangles, as she attaches them to the rose-coloured satin. On the hob is a deep china jug, covered over with a small cymbal, the companion to which holds the remaining spangles. All these creature comforts are highly essential, and highly acceptable to the returner, at a late hour, from a long and tiresome last rehearsal, as I can well testify. The reader will, perhaps, have anticipated they are waiting for the gifted stage-manager of the Ipswich

Theatre Royal, who is momentarily expected to knock and ring.

A knock comes, but not a ring. 'Tis he, no doubt, *present*, but *absent* mentally, studying over Hardy-canute. Mrs. F. starts up, though you would scarcely perceive it, she is so short and so fat, like dear, little Mrs. Liston, in "Dolla-Lolla," and Mrs. Liston always looked sitting when standing in the carriage. It is not he! A lady's voice is heard at the bottom of the somewhat narrow deal stairs, with the somewhat narrow, star-dotted, narrowest of narrow stair-carpets.

The inquiry is for *Mr. Fitzharold*.

He is not in from the *theater*. But the lady can walk up. Doubtless an order for tickets on the ensuing benefit night. Mrs. F. fusses about for a bill. "Love's Labour Lost," and the "Unwelcome Guest."

The lady enters. She is handsome and well attired. She inquires for Mr. Fitzharold.

"He has not yet returned from the re-

hearsal, Mum ; but if you require tickets it's all the same : I am Mrs. Fitzharold !” At the same time drawing herself up with all the little dignity she possessed, to curtsy, as much as possible, like Mrs. Siddons in *Lady Macbeth*.

“ Ye Mrs. Fitzharold,” cried the unknown, in a somewhat contemptuous scotch accent. “ I’m sorry ye’re na *batter* informed. Look at me. I pity ye fra my soul, for a’ that ; I am Mrs. Fitzharold.”

Mrs. F. number one, was so astounded by the calm, sneering manner in which the stranger uttered these *withering* words, she would have fallen to the ground, but, by some providential interference, her hand, in catching hold of something whereby to sustain her, fell upon the handle of the china jug on the hob, and if she applied a portion of its contents to her lips, it only goes to prove how collected certain minds can be, though in a *little* body, under certain *great* emergencies. Then leaning her shoulder against the rim of the table, exactly its

height, she stood, like a martyr at the stake, silently awaiting her doom.

A long story is here told ; a story of two wives and two weddings. It is Mrs. F. the first come to reclaim her faithless one, like Imogene of old, reversing the characters, and carrying him off as her spouse. She has become rich by a thumping legacy, and wishes to reclaim her wanderer, and make amends for the past. She has sought him long and vainly, but in consequence of his having fallen into Fitz, has never, till recently, been able to trace his fugitive steps.

What is to be done? There are two Juliets in the verandah—two female Richmonds in the field to-day instead of one!

These women, so mutually wronged, and by one man, *feel like women*, as women feel for each other. They resolve to die for each other. A bottle of laudanum is at hand, as it sometimes happens in the melodramas at the Victoria—no one knows how, which is the beauty of it. They embrace each other with tears in their eyes. Then

drinking each her portion of the oblivious antidote, lie down on the same little narrow black horse-hair sofa, to die in each other's arms.

Another knock, and this time a ring, succeeds. The hero of our pathetic story has returned. He is not in the best of tempers, grumbling at the maid, who grumbles at him in return. But the closed eyes of her that he expects to find, and her that he does not expect to find, hear him not. He enters the apartment, and, accustomed as he is to *startling* situations, he is a little surprised at finding his wife with her eyes closed and fast asleep on the sofa, locked in the embrace of another woman.

The smell of the laudanum leads, however, to a conviction of some appalling catastrophe. He rings up all the house, the doctor next door is called in, the stomach pump is put in request, if invented in those days, if not, the equally efficacious pump at the back door. They recover—Mrs. F. one, and, appalling to the senses

of the Hardicanute of the night, Mrs. F. two, from the heart of Mid Lothian. One weeps like Polly, the other reproaches like Lucy; he sings, like Macheath, "How happy could I be with either," drinks the rest of the contents, not of the laudanum bottle, but of the china jug, eats best part of the roast mutton, and marches back to the *theatre*.

Hardicanute, not being a Bluebeard, never dared to show his face in the domestic circle of his two wives again. Conscience quite overcame him, and the next morning he coached off on a shooting excursion to his friend Clark's, in Norfolk. In the meantime, under the sweet sympathy which mutual grief and mutual laudanum bring about, and a cup of strong tea, with something more *comfortable* than laudanum in it, these poor disconsolate ladies managed to console themselves for his infidelity and abrupt departure; and for years after, as Mrs. F. the first generously resolved to share her newly-acquired for-

tune with some one, she thought, next to herself, her double Mrs. F., the second, was the nearest akin, to share it with; and stranger than fiction though this truth may seem, they became inseparable friends, and absolutely resided together for the rest of their days. Nor have I heard, as it ought to have been, according to dramatic law, that the married Lothario either shot himself while in pursuit of the plump Norfolk partridges, or died inconsolable for the loss of *both* his wives.

Amongst the earliest of our novelties, this season, was a melodrame called the "Hindoo Robber," who, by the way, did not rob the public for a long time, for as the principal performers, two learned dogs, did not happen to be quite up in their parts on the first night, there was a great yelping, in the galleries in particular. At the end of the first act, one of the dogs, having been fired at, had to die on a rock, which he did, so admirably, that the applause filled the house from top to bottom; at

which the other dog, like too many professionals, became somewhat jealous of his friend, and rushed on the stage, to show how much better he could die, and died also. This might have passed off equally well, because, according to all rules of melodrame, it might have been supposed that, deeply affected by the loss of his companion, he had died of a broken heart. But, unfortunately, in his great effort to please the public, the poor fellow burst his skin, composed of webbing, spotted, to resemble a leopard,—the two dogs were the *leopards* of the Jumna,—and in so doing, out started an additional tail, so that the second *leopard* was endowed with the tail of a leopard and the tail of a dog also. The piece was proceeding with an intensity of interest, when this unlooked-for mistake occurred; and, I have no doubt, absurd as it may appear, but for the breaking of a needleful of thread, instead of the spontaneous combustion of laughter which ensued, the “Hindoo Robber” would have become

as popular as the "Caravan Driver and his Dog," of famous memory. Well may they say misfortune hangs on a thread. Every theatrical has heard the old story of the prompter, during the run of the *Caravan*, crying out that the play must be changed, as the *principal tragedian* was taken ill. "Good heavens! you inconsiderate block-head," cried the manager, with a long respiration, "how you alarmed me, I was afraid it was the *dog*. Bring me a strong tumbler of brandy and water."*

* Being on the subject of dogs, I must relate an anecdote of one told me by Mrs. Egerton. She said that some manager in the Isle of Wight being on a theatrical tour there, met with a servant going to shoot a dog, whose master, an officer, unfortunately for his dog, had been ordered unexpectedly abroad. The manager, being a humane man, and compassionating the fate of the poor condemned dumb animal, requested him as a gift, which request was readily acceded to, and the manager in his turn made him a present to a friend, who took him away accordingly, and became exceedingly attached to his new canine acquaintance. It so happened, however, after a considerable lapse of time, the new master of the dog died at Portsmouth, leaving the dog to the gentle mercy of his inconsolable widow, who speedily sent out poor Tray a second time to be shot. His old friend, the manager, of the Isle of Wight, happening, however, to arrive that very

Mr. Charles Dance

brought us an excellent new comedy called "The Country Squire," of which I need say little, as it still remains popular, as it at once became, before the public. Farren was the Country Squire, and a better representative could not have been found. I cannot understand why men so talented suddenly leave off writing. It cannot be that his pieces are no longer sought after by managers, I should think, because in his way there is nothing so good as to bear comparison with his productions. All the *darling babbies* and *Susan's young men*, and the gushing young ladies now in possession of some of our theatres, are not

morning at Portsmouth, again met Tray, who recognised him, and again saved his life.

Another anecdote on the heel of this may not be here ill-timed. After Mrs. Egerton's death, I wished to visit her grave in Chelsea churchyard. I wandered about the gravestone, but could not discover it. At length a little grey dog was running before me, till it stopped on the flat stone where slept the remains of my kind old Joan of Arc—her name nearly hid in weeds and grass. The dog then *vanished*. On going away I inquired of the Sexton what had become of his dog. He thought it was mine ; he had never seen it before.

worth the boot-tops of that fine old English gentleman, the Country Squire.*

Mr. William Farren, senr.

Farren was a fine actor—so natural: Lewis, Smith's treasurer, a very facetious and clever man, at Drury Lane, told me a droll story connected with Farren's acting one night at the Haymarket, in Grandfather Whitehead. Lewis was seated in the pit, when he heard two Yorkshire farmers, who had evidently come up to London to see the cattle show, but as equally bent on witnessing a little bit of theatrical show before their return. They were (*entre acte*) discussing the merits of Farren. "He's a *claver old* fellow that," observed the first. "Don't he hit off the *character* to a hair?" "Well, I don't exactly say that," replied the latter, "to my mind he has one *great*

* A sensible remark, on giving advice, of Charles Dance's, is worthy of record as it is of imitation. "I never offer advice where I don't feel it will be taken: it is throwing away an opinion to no purpose." This gentleman has since favoured the public with a new highly successful comedy at the Strand Theatre, called "Marriage a Lottery."

drawback, he's *too natral* loike, for play acting!"

Mr. Macready played Macbeth also excellently, as he played everything. But Edmund Kean's was better, and I think that Charles Young's was the best of all.* One night while Macready was enacting the Noble Thane, I happened to be seated in a private box with Sheridan Knowles, the greatest writer, as everybody must confess, since old Shakspeare. It was at the scene

* A lady, (a Miss Baily,) once gave me the link of a chain, which, she assured me, was *actually* said to be a link of Macbeth's armour, given to her by some Scottish nobleman. I did not exactly give credence to the identity of this link, nor do I think the lady placed implicit faith in it herself. It had the appearance of a flat ring of bronze, and nothing more. But judge of my surprise, on examining this apparent ring of bronze, *with a microscope*, on finding that it was silver, richly gilt, resembling a serpent with its tail in its mouth!—the eyes, mouth, and every scale exquisitely wrought. Thence, it follows, whosoever's armour it formed a portion of, could have been no ordinary man. *If* Macbeth's, then the armour in which he fell was *chain* armour. What an authority here for a costumier, or the programme of a Shaksperian play bill. My intention was to have had this extraordinary link set in a ring; but either I laid it *too carefully* by, or some *friend* to whom I offered it for inspection *borrowed* it, as books are not unfrequently *borrowed* from the British Museum.

where Macbeth enters the cavern to consult the weird sisters before the diabolical cauldron. It might be, perhaps, that the pernicious *spirits* were in the *ascendant*, *below*, and that the demon master-carpenter, under their refractory influence, did not at first, like Caliban, willingly obey the witch's bidding, till feeling additional cramps and pains for his disobedience, he sent up the baby image of a king with such a spasmodic jerk, that the poor grim little spectre's gilt crown flew off, showing a very palpable pasteboard lining. In this dilemma, M'Ion, third witch, with great presence of mind, and great adroitness, assuming the air of a conjuror who aims at being thought perfectly necromantic, took up the shadowy diadem and performed a solemn coronation on the royal spectre, as if it were merely putting on the lid of a teapot. The audience did not laugh, which showed the great control held over them by Macready, who went on with all the majesty of Scotland in his looks.

Knowles turned round with a comic smile, and whispered—"I can imagine Macready's feelings at this moment, although his dignity never deserts him, even under a scene so ludicrous." But Macready's dignity was more potent than that, for it seemed to cast a spell over his audience: no one dared to smile, much more to laugh.

It appears to me that I have slipped over the production of "Thalaba the Destroyer," from Southey's poem, nor should I have recurred to it but for the peculiarity of the circumstances attending it being very amusing. Osbaldiston came over the Bridge of *Sighs*, as I now called the hanging bridge at the back of the flies, his face was again as the book printed in blue, in which men read strange matters. I read them quickly. Things were dull, expenses heavy—he wanted superior strength to his company, Macready, Vandenhoff, Farren, Webster, H. Wallack, Mrs. Glover, Helen Faucit. He had *luckily*, he said, engaged *superior* strength.

I listened with amazement for the disclosure. Had the elder Kean come back again?—was Miss O'Neil about to return to the boards? My intense curiosity, however, was not to remain on the stretch long. He told me, with a gust of satisfaction, that he had engaged the Burmah bulls, elephants, ostriches, I think, and heaven knows what besides, from the Surrey Zoological Gardens, with the Burmese carriage, in which Miss Vincent was to ride as Thalaba the Destroyer, holding in her hand, out of the window, the *burning sword*. I had written a piece on that subject years before for the Cobourg, in which Mr. Huntley, the stage manager of that theatre, hobbling with *gout*, hobbled the young and *alert* Thalaba. I saw my doom; I offered no resistance, and availing myself of the old drama, the parts were speedily ready for the new performers, who, whatever they needed in other requisites, were full of *animal* spirit, one of the greatest essentials for the stage. So eager to make their *debut* were the bulls,

that they *butted* down the doors of the stable, P.S., and let out the elephants, just at the very moment when Kawla, the Enchantress, poor Mrs. West, (who, though she wore a fine crown, studded all over with the stars of night, was *ungrateful* enough to express her exceeding dislike to this part,) surrounded by all the genii, male and female, was listening, with very abstracted attention to an *infernal* chorus, under the roots of the ocean—two hundred of us, I amongst the rest, not as one of the identical infernals, only as an infernal author, were assembled on the stage, when, whether it was that the stage-struck quadrupeds thought they were in duty bound to join in a *roaring*, chorus so akin to their own, I know not, but in an instant they rushed forth in a body, roaring like thunder—the chorus in the “Huguenots,” “Traviata,” and the “Trovatore,” were a whisper to it, and this with powerful horn accompaniments. The confusion which ensued—yelling, shrieking, running, may be best imagined ;

everybody took to his or her heels, helter skelter, and without precedence. Luckily there was an immense stone staircase at hand, up which, in less time than it has taken to record this fact, we had all ensconced ourselves, leaving the entire possession of the stage to our new allies. As for the enchantress, *Kanla*, when the rehearsal commenced, the call-boy did *call her* long in vain. Yet, after all, these elephants were very docile; they were very young, and played with each other like kittens. In ascending the stairs to enter the theatre, it was curious to see them cautiously try every step gently with their feet to ascertain whether it possessed sufficient strength to sustain their weight. Their likes and dislikes, too, are very remarkable: An old elephant some years ago, I was told by Mrs. Egerton, in a procession in "Blue Beard," could not be induced to advance toward the footlights, till Mrs. Parker, a celebrated columbine, playfully taking hold of its ear, said "Come along, Chucky, let you and I

walk together." Singular to say, the docile animal immediately suffered her to lead it round the stage, which she did the whole run of the popular melodrame.

Another circumstance was inexplicable to me, although of a much simpler nature. I produced in the early part of this season, the translation of a French vaudeville, handed over to me by Osbaldiston himself, called "*Mutual Expense*," which neither Mr. Ben. Webster, nor Mrs. Glover, with all their talent, could *lead* by the *ear*, although they both did their very best. The audience, or a clique, disapproved it from the beginning; I must think it a clique of some sort, because, if the piece had been an indifferent one, Webster and Mrs. Glover were both too good judges to have played in it. However, so it was—it was a decided d——nation.

T. P. Cooke.

My old friend, T. P. Cooke, joined us with his unrivalled performance, in Douglas Jerrold's interesting, and always money-bringing nautical drama of "Black Eyed

Susan," founded on Gay's immortal poem ; it charmed everybody here, as it had done everywhere else. He also enacted Tom Coffin, in the "Pilot," with equal success ; I know not from what cause, but a serious altercation took place just about this period, between Osbaldiston and Harry Wallack, the stage manager ; and to such an extreme did the former carry his resentment, that he gave orders Wallack should be refused admission at the stage door, although his name was inserted to play, in the bills of the evening. Wallack, however, who was anything but deficient in courage, came at night to the theatre, dressed for his part ; and when the substitute was about to make his entrance, pushed boldly past him, and played Dentatus in spite of the manager himself, who, though exceedingly provoked, could not help laughing at the singularity of the circumstance. Osbaldiston seems here to have grown very quarrelsome ; we had a star in the person of a gentleman named Otway, who performed remarkably well the character

of "Hamlet," and looked it to perfection. What Osbaldiston found to dispute with Mr. Otway about, I am at a loss to guess ; I never encountered a more polite or affable gentleman. Then we had a Mr. Hamblin, from America, also in Hamlet, and Coriolanus, a sterling, good actor ; and a succession of stars, shining one after the other, (I cannot recognise dates.) I was passing through the hall, then in Hart Street, into the theatre, when a stranger followed me mysteriously ejaculating into my ear, what seemed an anxious admonition, the single monosyllable *hide* ! Having no apprehension of a sheriff's officer, and assassinations being in those days a thing of rare occurrence in England, I naturally enquired what I was to hide for ? The gentleman himself smiled, and informed me that his name was *Hide* ; that he had come to rehearsal in Shylock, and, as he was unknown to the hall porter, (my tall old friend of early mention) he wished me merely to pass him into the theatre. I believe his

acting was good, but the house unluckily bad ; he gained no disapproval, but, perhaps, disappointed or offended, he disappeared quickly after the fall of the curtain, and was gone, when absolutely called for by the select few. An interval succeeded ; renewed calls, when, at last, Webster presented himself, observing with great gravity—" ladies and gentlemen, I have been to *seek Mr. Hide* in all parts of the house, and he is nowhere to be *found*." A convulsion of mirth ensued, and every one was satisfied with so facetious an explanation.

A new melodrame had been written for T. P. Cooke, called "False Colours," it was more interesting than nautical ; I quite forget now what it was about. Cooke did not fancy the part, and our "False Colours" were speedily, therefore, hauled down. The only good thing in the performance, which lives in my recollection, was the sinking of a ship in the centre of the stage, much more natural than the big ship in the Pilot at the Adelphi, which threw all London into

a state of excitement. It was during the rehearsal of this drama, in consequence of H. Wallack having quitted the managership, that Osbaldiston desired me to find another gentleman to supply his place. It was not my business to do so, but I immediately suggested to him Mr. Ben. Webster, as the most capable person in the company. Accordingly, I was deputed to conduct that worthy son of Momus to his new appointment, which, be sure I did quickly ; and it was well it was done quickly, for he soon proved himself to be one of the most valuable of stage-managers. A new tragedy was produced for Mr. Macready's benefit, called "Strafford," in which the great tragedian, of course, played Strafford. It was uncommonly well received, and I afterwards took it for my own benefit ; I had two benefits during my engagement at Covent Garden, on which occasions, the greatest singer of her time, and probably of any other time sang for me, namely, Madame Grisi, as also did my friend Balfe, and that excellent vocalist of vocalists, Ivanhoffe. I

afterwards had another very profitable benefit at Covent Garden, on which occasion the *Siege of Rochelle* was produced, first time at that theatre, and Balfe, Giubeli, Templeton, and Madame Balfe, sang for me gratis. It was on this occasion that Mr. Maddox, manager of the Princess's Theatre, was so very generous, as absolutely to change his bill of his week's performance in order to lend me a lady and gentleman or two to fill up my cast in the opera. I simply record this to prove to those ladies and gentlemen that I have not outlived gratitude, and also to say something about a lady so popular, so talented, and so generous as—

Lola Montez.

In making what is called a benefit, people who are unsophisticated in theatrical affairs, should know that every one is anxious to secure everything like attraction within his grasp, especially in a theatre where the expenses are, sometimes, from two to three hundred pounds. Benefit had followed be-

nefit; at both houses every novelty had been resorted to; nothing new was left to me. This benefit, which I fully expected would prove to me a decided loss, annoyed me sadly; I was sauntering up Regent Street when I met Stretton, the popular singer, whose benefit was just coming off, he assured me that he had secured every attraction worthy of the public, and that there was no hope left for me, unless, indeed, he added satirically, turning back, you could secure the Lola Montez.

“The Lola Montez,” reiterated I, “pray what is *that*?” in my ignorance, not knowing.

“Lola Montez is a lady who appeared the other night, at Her Majesty’s Theatre, the Opera in the Haymarket, a dancer, but owing to some aristocratic disturbance, has quitted the place in disgust; the papers were full of it; I have been and offered her fifty pounds to dance for me, and met with a decided refusal, so, as I observed just now, I see no hope for *you*.”

This ended our conversation, except my enquiring the address of the beautiful, enraged Lola Montez, which, having obtained, I repaired at once to her apartments, and simply by sending up my card, was graciously admitted. She was sitting for her portrait, a charming likeness, but far less charming than the original.

I explained my errand, and was at once, as Stretton had foretold, left without hope. It was, perhaps, that a look of disappointment, if not something of distress crossed my features, but in an instant, her look changed ; her voice also. " I will, however," she continued, blandly, " ask my mamma," I think she said mamma, " what she thinks of it ; give me your address, I will write to you !" I thanked her very cordially ; made my bow, and my exit, carrying with me to the theatre, very little anticipation of a good result. I was occupied at the rehearsal of the opera, two hours, perhaps ; Balfe, and his sensitive and gifted wife, were there, and pressed me strongly to dinner ;

but as I never in my life absented myself from my own dinner table at home, without specifying the same, being a very punctual man, I knew my remaining out would cause great anxiety ; therefore, home I went. Judge of my surprise on entering the drawing room, at finding Madame Lola Montez, seated on the sofa, chatting with my wife, as familiarly as if they had known each other for years. She had already made up her mind to dance for me ! When I mentioned terms, she refused to hear me, and in fact, intended, and did dance for me for *nothing*. When the announcement appeared, everybody was astonished, and everybody was calculating the enormous amount of the sum I had consented to give for the attraction ; and a great attraction it proved ; the theatre was crammed. After all, my hopeless benefit proved the best of the season ; and the usual remark was made, a remark invariably applied to any success of mine, that, from down right good luck, I had as usual alighted on my feet.

Lola Montez arrived on the evening, in a splendid carriage, accompanied by her maid, and without the slightest affectation, entered the dressing room prepared for her reception. When she was dressed to appear on the stage, she sent for me, to enquire whether I thought the costume she had chozen for the occasion would be approved of by my friends. I have seen sylphs appear, and female forms of the most dazzling beauty, in ballets and fairy dramas, but the most dazzling and perfect form I ever did gaze upon, was Lola Montez, in her splendid white and gold attire, studded with diamonds, that night. Her bounding before the public, was the signal of general applause and general admiration of her beauty—and general admiration of her dancing, which was quite unlike anything the public had ever seen; so original, so flexible, so graceful, so indescribable. At the conclusion of her performance, I need scarcely add, how raptuous and universal was the call for her re-appearance; after

which, when I advanced with delighted thanks, again holding up her hand, in graceful remonstrance, she refused to hear me, and in half-an-hour, in the same carriage, had quitted the theatre; from that time I have never again had the exceeding pleasure of seeing the *generous*, the beautiful Madame Lola Montez*. On that same occasion, Mrs. Gratton was to have sung for me "*The Cross Old Bachelor*," a popular song, of my own writing, at the time, but did not arrive, from some accident, till the curtain was down. The malcontents kicked up a bit of a row in the upper gallery; I was seated in the green room, waiting for the coach, to go home, when Balfe hurried in, "Do you hear that?" enquired he, quite surprised at *my* philosophy: I, generally so nervous, "Certainly!" "But, my dear *Fitzzy*," the familiar appellation by which he generally

* Singular as are the various reports respecting her, which have reached us in different papers, to me, at least, as I have here set down, and everyone must allow it, she was all that was generous, ladylike, and gentle.

addressed me, "they'll break the chandelier." "That's the affair of the managers, my dear *Balfy*," I replied, "I took the theatre for *last night*, it's now *to-morrow morning*." I should have been very sorry, nevertheless, with all my pretended stoicism, had any accident happened to the magnificent chandelier, and to prevent such a result, ordered the gas to be turned off, which soon set my friends, the gods, scampering, lest they should have to grope their way out of the attic regions, in darkness. At that moment, poor Mrs. Grattan arrived; having had to play in the last piece at the Princess's, she could not possibly have escaped sooner; and the good-natured soul burst into tears at the disappointment, no less to herself than to me, and I had the greatest difficulty to console her.

On the subject of tragedies, the most successful and eminently deservedly so, of late years, was the "*Ion*" of Sergeant Talfourd, afterwards Sir W. Talfourd; although highly classic, it was neither marble-like enough to

be cold, nor was it at all heavy, which are generally the defects of works of this description; the chiselling is mostly rendered so fine as to lose sight of the chiselling of nature. "Ion," in my opinion, is a model painting, for classic dramatists to imitate. They generally write as if the Greeks and Romans of other days were stiff, passionless, and bloodless, as the statues which represent them. This is not the case with "Ion," which was a beautiful and interesting specimen of life, as doubtless it passed in the days of Ion's existence. This play became very fashionable, "Seated in my chamber there," how frequently did I hear, with sincere gratification, the unceasing rattle of the numerous carriages, bringing aristocrat after aristocrat, to witness the triumph of the great, the good, the learned Serjeant Talfourd. It was just such a powerful and *human* pen as Talfourd's, which *might* have restored Melpomene to her throne.

Tragedy, however, has never long at a

time been the fashion in this country—except at intervals, where such great spirits started up, as Garrick, John Kemble, Mrs. Siddons, the Miss O’Neil, the elder Kean, and to do him justice of late years, the *younger* Kean; even the talent of the immortal Johnson, could not render tragedy popular. So convinced, however, was the learned doctor, of his gigantic ability to do the state good service, that he sat confidently in a front stage box, with a scarlet gold-laced waistcoat on, to witness the result. “Irene” proved a failure, with the public, notwithstanding all the knowledge of the classic leviathan. Dramatic knowledge is unteachable. Speaking of Johnson, I was one day dining at a friend’s, and happening to sit near an aged gentleman, of the name of Bowden, some one made a quotation from *Rasselas*! “Ah!” exclaimed Mr. Bowden, “the last time I saw the doctor, (meaning Doctor Johnson,) he was leaning against a post in Fleet Street, his wig in his hand, wiping the perspiration from his face, with his

handkerchief." I could not avoid staring with surprise at a man who had seen Doctor Johnson! It seemed to me as astonishing as saying he had seen King Cheops walking about in one of the pyramids; and yet, after all, my own mother, when she was a girl, had seen, and been in the society of Doctor Goldsmith, at Sir Charles Bunbury's, at Barton Hall.

During the season, we also re-produced "Esmeralda," as an opera, selecting the music, principally from Weber's "Preciosa," for Collins, who played Phœbus, and Miss Romer as Esmeralda. Collins played and sang excellently, but Miss Romer created quite a sensation. Her entrance, attended by the gipsies, dancing, with innumerable numbers of coins, glittering and jingling on their wide flowing skirts,* under a canopy of tapestry of all colours, was one of the most picturesque, peculiar effects I ever

* So picturesque were those groups, that the late Duchess of St. Alban's frequently engaged them to dance at her mansion, for the amusement of her guests.

remember to have seen represented on the stage. Ransford, in his Bohemian costume, and with his fine manly voice, contributed greatly to the effect of this performance. On the termination of the opera, Miss Romer, in particular, having been unanimously called for, amongst a great number of bouquets thrown at her feet, a bunch of beautiful fresh roses was mingled, which, seeing in her hand, as I was thanking her for the great service she had rendered me, by her splendid exertions, I could not resist my admiration of the roses, also. "Take them," she said, "they belong to you." I did not take them as belonging to *me*, but I took them out of the admiration I felt for a mind so refined and poetical, as to offer such a disclaiming, modest, and beautiful compliment.

Notwithstanding all that I have said respecting the non-attraction, generally, of tragedy, merely to show how weak is human nature; I had, myself, the vanity to write, and the audacity to produce a tragedy also,

called "Walter Tyrrel, the man who shot Rufus with the arrow;" Mr. Vandenhoff was to enact Walter, and Miss H. Faucit was obliging enough to enact the Heroine; then we had Webster, and Miss Vincent in the under current. It was read, and I owe it to myself to say, greatly approved in the green room; the rehearsals went swimmingly on, when one morning, like Dickens' story about the sandwiches, and no mouth to put them in, we had "Walter Tyrrel," and no "Walter Tyrrel" to put into the part; Vandenhoff had left the theatre, and sailed, I believe, for America, justly disgusted with Osbaldiston, for placing him in a half-price piece. I felt very much humiliated by this circumstance, and thought, by way of self-torment, he had been frightened away by my scarecrow tragedy; and that, because I was not Sheridan Knowles, he did not care to play for me. It was exactly the reverse, as I afterwards discovered; a more kindly intention was never felt in my behalf, than that of Vandenhoff; I ought

to have known it by the approval which he expressed of my piece, and absolutely told me, also, that his gifted daughter, Miss Vandenhoff, herself a dramatist and poetess, had highly commended my *language*, for which gift, *hacknied* in the service of managers, I was not greatly in the habit of receiving the highest compliments; it was therefore a proud feeling for me to see a sentence of mine underlined for its merit, by the pencil of Miss Vandenhoff,

“Where Misery braids her hair with threads of gold.”

To repair the loss of Mr. Vandenhoff, we were fortunate enough to find an able substitute in

Mr. Elton.

Mr. Elton set about his task with all the intensity and ardour of a man resolved honestly to do his duty to the letter, no matter who the author was, Shakspeare or Fitzball. Miss Helen Faucit, as zealously imitated his example—not that her willingness required an example—Webster and Miss Vincent, too, though in the rear, were

not behind in zeal, good intention, and with some of Charles Marshall's most beautiful scenery, my *tragedy* had an excellent reception, the performers being all called for before the curtain. In those days, it was not the fashion to call for the author; and indeed, I think it much better "in the breach than the observance;" authors, like violets, are best under the leaves. Of Elton's acting in this, and many other much more important pieces, it would require more space than I have to spare in these pages, to do him ample justice. He was a pure actor, with a most expressive eye, not unlike the elder Kean's, and not unlike Charles Young in his acting; always perfect, always in earnest; a small man, with a most telling and mellifluous voice; and off the stage, a most exemplary character. He was lost, sad to say, on his passage from Dublin, where he had been to fulfil an engagement, as a star, and his body, like that of poor Power, never found.

Sheridan Knowles.

Dear, excellent, inspired Sheridan Knowles, our modern Shakspeare, brought us an original drama, called "Brian Borohume," which ran with general approval to the end of the season ; the Hecuba to which we had come at last. A fine speech was made about successful pieces, and successful authors, never in the slightest degree referring to me with my hod of mortar, the drudge and stopgap of many a highsounding *failure*, when salaries could not else have been paid. I see, by remarks in my diary, that my feelings were *greatly hurt* by this injustice. It would have been ridiculous to drag the under current of my life before the public ; but, at all events, my tragedy of Walter Tyrrel, if not the most successful play of the season, was an originality, and *one* of the most successful and *attractive* ; and, when transplanted into a last piece, the houses fell down to so low an ebb, at the first price, that the manager had no alternative but to restore Walter Tyrrel to the head of the

bill. A sort of practical compliment, too well understood by *all* managers, especially on a *Saturday*, when the *treasurer* is the critic, who, with true mathematical skill, by the application of figures, dissolves the most glittering bubbles into truisms, bringing into his commentary, that somewhat matter-of-fact quotation—

“Those who please to live, must live to please.”

And, although far be it from me, not to estimate perfection, still where perfection cannot be sustained, like the gold without the alloy, then, I do say, that the alloy, without which your gold would fall into dust, is as essentially worthy of commendation, and a word of appreciation, as your *gold itself*.

It is hardly worth while for me to go into a recapitulation of this term of management under Mr. Osbaldiston, who, in consequence of having realised a large sum of money, by what is called a *minor* drama, “Jonathan Bradford,” fully determined, I believe, to invest himself with a theatre royal,

and try the effect of a *larger* minor drama in a larger theatre. A theatre royal, I have frequently heard the case argued by men speculative as Osbaldiston was, but he was the *first* to try the experiment. It *did* answer the first season ; he cleared two thousand pounds : the second season, Osbaldiston lost himself, in listening to every one's opinion, without abiding by his own good common sense. The yelping cry of legitimacy haunted him wherever he went ; till, like the knight in the fairy tale, the cotton of self-control not being stuffed into his ears, he became terrified at the Gorgon sound of his own voice, and in the querulous nervousness of his heart, began to chime in with the cry of legitimacy himself. Well, we *had* what is called legitimacy ; we had the very *best* authors and actors that could be engaged. In referring to the management of Osbaldiston, writers and speakers have always lost sight of this important fact : we had Charles Kemble, Macready, Vandenhoff, Elton, Farren, Power, Collins,

H. Wallack, Tilbury, Webster, Mrs. West, Miss Helen Faucit, Miss Romer, Miss Turpin, Miss Taylor, and a whole phalanx of others nearly as good. Yet, the second season, startling as the disclosure may appear, we lost the two thousand pounds we made the season before! How is this to be accounted for? Added to which, the very reviewers who had abused our illegitimacy, turned round and abused our legitimacy still more. So, like the man and his ass, if a manager attempt to please everybody, he will please nobody. The bugbear about the legitimate drama, is a rockstaff, and a piece of ignorant cant. Everything dramatic, that is *moral*, interesting, and *amusing to the public*, is the legitimate drama, whether it be illuminated with blue fire, or in one act, or in twenty. What did Knowles say to me once on this very subject? I was rehearsing

* On rational calculation, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the great outlay for all these heavy increased salaries was considerably more than the reduced prices of the theatre could afford; and, as those salaries were not incurred during the first season, Cocker's services are not required to prove the result.

for Madame Vestris, my serio ballet of "Hans of Iceland," when I saw Knowles standing at the P.S., lost in contemplating the scene, and rivetted, as it were, to the interest of the action going on ; for, understand, there was not a word spoken. I met Knowles the next morning, in Cranbourne Alley, when I enquired what he had found to interest him so in our rehearsal ? "Everything, my boy," was his reply—the very spirit of the drama. Action that speaks and appeals to the heart, as forcibly, if not more so, than the finest speech. Then he was pleased to pay me a very great compliment, which, coming from so great a man, I may be justified in speaking of, especially since it leads to a new conclusion.

"You are very indulgent, and can afford to be so," was my reply, "to a mere writer of melodrame."

"Melodrame !" reiterated the poet, "and pray what is *Macbeth* but melodrame ? and *Richard the Third*, and Shakspeare's plays in general, if you come to that ? melodrame."

Here was a conviction ! Shakspeare, then, is *not* the *legitimate* drama. Many's the time I've wondered in my own mind, how Messrs. Phelps and Greenwood contrived to push Shakspeare, year after year, down the throats of the Sadlers Wellers, (setting aside the *fine* acting of the former), and C. Kean, season after season, with the "Winter's Tale," "Hamlet," and "King Lear;" to be sure, Kean lards them over, finely, beautifully; and, as I am, in heart a great champion of all that sort of thing, I may be excused for relating here, what I once heard a great legitimist say on that subject. "It seems to me," said he, "as if the actors at the Princess's all played *behind* the scenes, instead of before them, as in John's time formerly. We see little there now; but the scenes, which are continually on the move, like magic lantern." He was one of the *oldest* legitimists of all; and liked better, scenes that rounded up, when you saw the good admonitory rope at each end, passing under the ponderous rollers. Grieves, Telbin,

James, Fenton, Marshall, and William Beverley, have something to answer for, to the ghosts of departed scene carpenters, especially such as died in the *legitimate odour* of ropes and rollers.

But turning back a leaf to Knowles. If, then, Shakspeare be not this long cried-for, croaked-for, printed-for, blustered-for, legitimate drama—what is the legitimate drama? It seems to me, this: a new manager starts a new management; he is a stranger to London, but has, for years, managed the Theatre Royal Plumptre Marsh, where the gas is not yet laid on. He has read with great intensity, for years, the “Figaroes,” the “Theatrical Dampers,” the “Scene Shifter’s Album,” the “Legitimate Admonitor,” the “Musical Invincible,” and laughed, till his sides ached, as they have, in the most powerful language, elicited the stupid mistake of actors, authors, composers, singers, and, in short, the *great mistake* of everything theatrical in London. Above all, deploring with a

pathos quite heartrending to the self-applauding manager of Plumpton Marsh, the great decline of the *legitimate drama*, the proper restoration of which would confer the glory of martyrdom on a classical and spirited manager, who had the taste, genius, wit, and courage to undertake the Herculean task.

Mr. Plumpton Marsh.

Plumpton Marsh, the worshipped idol of his constantly paid little community of actors—in his estimation the actors of the *world*—Plumpton Marsh, at length, having saved a few hundreds, by wandering from place to place, and puffing himself off in *large letters* at the head of his bills, as *the Belphegor*, or *the Virginus*, or *the Magbeth*—*Mag*, according to his pronunciation, ever since he heard of such a word being discovered, cut on a stone amongst the ruins of Macbeth's castle—Plumpton comes to the desperate resolution, a theatre being to let in town, to take it, bring *his* company—the company—with him also, and with them

secure him the *rushing* attendance of the *grateful* million. Mr. P. now purchased a quire of the finest satin gilt-edged, watered, *moire-antique*, and Spitgiggings is deputed to pen a balmy note to three of the most powerfully-writing editors, inviting them to a little *déjeûner*. They, those awfully great men, all legitimists, condescendingly sacrifice their time, as martyrs, ready to expire in a legitimate cause, and confidentially accept the invitation—not altogether, but separately. Each was charmed with Mr. P., but with Mrs. P. no language could pourtray the delighted feeling they could not express, especially as the cold chicken is being washed down their august throats with iced champagne. At length, to come to business: Terence Beak, has condescendingly brought with him a legitimate tragedy, “Pope Pius,” to be played without scenery. Mr. Neverlaugh presents him with a screaming farce, called “A Cold Reception,” entirely divested of frivolous play upon words, or vulgar practical jokes,

till, at the conclusion, the comic man falls into a horsepond, off the stage, according to the strict rules of the classic drama. Mr. Sheridan Bowles has a comedy for which he only expects, (happy is the man, &c.,) £300 sterling. *This* comedy is all to be played seated *à-la-Moliere*, and glorifies itself with the cheering title of the "Paralytic Stroke." Poor P. is not so lost but he begins, like poor George Barnwell, wise, alas! too late, to grow apprehensive of the legitimate, since this is pronounced to be its ultimatum—*his* only hope. But the frowning and haughty Mr. Terence Beak is a writer of the *Scourge*; Mr. Neverlaugh is on the *Eternal Smasher*; Mr. Sheridan Bowles edits the *Porcupine*. Mr. P., who has an excellent *money-bringing* drama by Perkins Popular, is ashamed to confess it, much more to produce it, and terrified into compliance by the dreaded castigations of the annihilating *Scourge*, *Smasher*, and *Porcupine*, he plays the first

two of their immaculate inspirations, which, notwithstanding the heading of the bill in large *red*, unread letters—*Restoration of the Legitimate Drama*, are received thinly and coldly by discriminating but *select* audiences. But although his last *stroke*, the “Paralytic Stroke,” is underlined, and places *kindly* advised to be taken early, from the apprehension of not obtaining any, luckless P., fortunately at all events for himself, this time escapes the paralytic stroke by the timely stroke of a writ, which cuts short, not only his anticipated triumph, and the gratitude of the million, but the *real legitimate drama* at the same time.*

Leaping, then, from this parable to the conclusion of the Osbaldiston management, as, on entering the theatre, he reduced the prices, it might be argued that he reduced

* These titles are all fact, having passed through my hands while reader, and the story a fact also. I thought no monstrosity could go beyond the “Paralytic Stroke,” till I convinced myself of the contrary by witnessing the “*Traviata*.”

the mental audience also ; yet I heard Kemble, say one night, as he came off the stage in Hamlet, that he never played to a more glorious one.

I did not consider our playing either the legitimate, or the illegitimate drama, except as regarded additional expense, which became more than double the second season, had anything to do with the loss of the second season. It was simply that the receipts were unequal to the outlay. And this confirmation of a practical result, must convince every mind, as well as mine, that in a proud country like England, there ought to be, as in France, a national theatre, aided by government, against loss, for the sole production of lofty, and classic dramas, where they would be witnessed by audiences, who could fully appreciate their high order of merit—too high for the general class of playgoers, who go more for amusement than instruction. Had such a theatre existed years ago, Doctor Johnson's "Irene," which, even then, was be-

yond the million, and many fine old plays; a loss to the every-day speculative manager to produce, would still be on the stage, represented by English Talmas, to the *great credit* of the country. The real legitimate drama, to such as prefer to call it so: the *regular drama* is the proper title. The French far excel us in their distinction of the *classing* of the *drama*; but the French are decidedly a dramatic nation, and support the drama like a *necessity*, which the English do not. While at the same time a great portion, I fear the greater portion of the people, do not see the *necessity* for theatres at all. It seems to me, strange, that *any* person, but the most ignorant or bigoted can discountenance the *moral* drama, while the works of Sophocles, Euripides, and the fine dramatic writings of the ancient dramatists, handed down to us from almost uncounted years, still preserve their freshness and their fame. I know of no sermon which has existed two hundred years. Sterne, and Tillotson, and Blair,

have almost lost their odour, while Shakspeare is as green as ever, like the divine rod of Aaron, perpetually putting forth fresh blossoms.

Osbaldiston, at nearly the end of the season, listening to everybody, and taking everyone's advice, with unceasing losses, seemed to lose all mastery over himself. He, therefore, by the advice of a *friend*, engaged Mr. Rophino Lacey, a gentleman of great talent, as a musical composer, and adapter, and formerly, in the time of Mr. Kemble, holding a position in the theatre, to be his, Osbaldiston's adviser and *manager*; but as Mr. Lacey could not perform impossibilities, any more than anybody else, Osbaldiston soon disagreed with him, and refused him the privilege of a private box, to which Mr. Lacey, as acting manager, appeared to think himself entitled, and after the close of the theatre, brought an action for compensation. Mr. Lacey lost this action, however, as it appeared the use of a box to a manager, is, simply an act of

courtesy, and not a *right*. I don't know for what purpose, but I was subpoenaed on this trial, together with Mr. Charles Kemble, and many others. It happened, drolly enough, when Charles Kemble was suddenly called into court, rising up somewhat hastily, his nether garment split open, and before he could make his appearance in the presence of his honour, he was compelled to retreat into the neighbouring tap-room and get sown up by an amiable old lady, who with needle and thread was ready and willing to do a kind turn to a great comedian.

Now farewell, a long farewell, to old Covent Garden, the scene of many a triumph, and many a heartburning—the latter seldom, as regarded the public, but as regarded the petty jealousies and “earwiggings,” which occur in all theatres. At the close of the theatre I gladly retook myself to ruralise in sylvan glens and valleys green, a short time in Twickenham, that classic retreat of the immortal Pope—

Wonderful Pope ! where, not far from his famous villa, and the interesting abode of Horace Walpole, and David Garrick, I sat myself down to compose a new opera for the brilliant Michael Balfe : this opera was

JOAN OF ARC,

and intended for the Theatre Royal Drury Lane ; so that I was no sooner out of one theatre than I was in another. My wife and daughter were with me. It was the blue summer ; and we were ensconced in beds of fragrant flowers—flowers which I almost worship. As I gazed upon their many-coloured tints, and wandered with my affectionate partner, and my little girl, through the lovely scenes of Richmond and Twickenham—“ thro’ the meadows, thro’ the valleys,” as Rodolph says in his song in “ Der Freischütz”—along the banks of the translucent Thames. I was happy, oh ! how happy ! I forgot all my annoyances, all my mortifications, which seemed to melt away in the pure air, like the witches in Macbeth. Balfe and his excellent wife, his

dear Lina, as he always, so affectionately, called her, came to see us very often, and a most joyous companion was then the sunny and radiant Michael Balfe. How greatly we esteemed them, and never could receive too much of their company. Sincerely do I believe never was friendship, or esteem more mutual. Under such happy circumstances, it was but natural that such inspirations, as I have heard them called, as the "Purple Cornflower," or the "Peace of the Valley," should enter an author's mind, or that the visionary and poetic character of "Joan of Arc" should develop itself, with so much romance and enthusiasm.

It was somewhat remarkable that I should be called on to write upon this subject; and my other piece, the melodrame, still playing, and has since been playing everywhere. In my melodrame, poor Mrs. Egerton was the heroine of Orleans; in the opera, Miss Romer. Balfe took home, piece by piece, the poetry, and, when finished, came again to Twickenham for more, till poem and

music were alike completed, and the libretto presented to Mr. Bunn, who accepted it immediately, and agreed without a demur, to terms. I must say, of all the managers I ever wrote for, Mr. Bunn was the most liberal; and of all the composers I ever wrote for, Balfe was the best tempered, and delighted when the slightest opportunity occurred to bestow praise, which is so encouraging to an author, especially a sensitive one like me. During the rehearsals of this opera at Drury Lane, an under current was going on at Covent Garden, (managed by Mr. Macready) inasmuch, as Serle was employed to write another *Joan of Arc*, a regular *blue fire* melodrame, in which Miss Huddard played Joan; so that even the great tragedian himself did not disclaim blue fire, when it answered his purpose. They brought out this piece some little time before we could produce ours, because, it is not so easy to hurry a heavy musical opera before the public, as a melodrame, which chiefly depends on the scene painter, and

firework-maker. It did us no harm that I was ever aware of, for our opera made quite a sensation, and ran a great number of nights to excellent houses. Balfe played in it himself; he was a baritone, and sang with great feeling, as well as taste and finish. Then I had Templeton, Anderson, Giubelei, Seguin, Miss Romer, Mrs. Anderson, and Miss Poole.

The Grieves'.

The exquisite scenery painted by the celebrated Mr. Grieve, and his two sons, Thomas and William, the most perfect scene painters in the world, as a combination; and the most perfect example of parental and filial affection I ever witnessed; for, though the sons were both, I believe, married men, they looked up to their father with a love, and deference to his talent, worthy of the minutest and most commendable record. It was a sight that made you happy to behold; in *their* scene-room, genius always found a welcome footing, and a gracious smile. Many of my happiest

moments have been passed there, inspecting their toil, which, when complete, and presented on the stage, never failed to *astonish* and *delight* the public. In this opera, Balfe's "Peace of the Valley," was thought by many to surpass his famous "Light of Other Days" in the "Maid of Artois," a work composed for the great Madame Malibran. There was, also, another song or Cavatina, by Templeton, with a magnificent violin accompaniment—"Dear Maid when thou art sleeping," worthy of all praise. To this opera, Mr. Bunn, an excellent general, added a beautiful ballet, called

The Daughter of the Danube,

in which that extraordinary posture-master, Wieland, played the Imp of the Danube, with an elasticity truly astounding. How he could distort his limbs, and absolutely transform himself into quite another person, almost made you doubt your senses, as to whether you were not in the presence of something supernatural, or under the influence of some mental delusion.

Templeton

Was a magnificent tenor, and a falsetto voice added, second only to Rubini. In the *Fra Poco of Lucia de Lammermoor*, he was very little behind that great artist. After Duprez had left England, Templeton took his part in "La Favorite," and was equally well received. Malibran always selected him as her lover in the "Somnambula, &c.," not because of any *tender* display he made, but because his voice was so sweet and expressive. Bunn tells a droll story about Malibran, pretending to be frightened (for it was all pretence) lest Templeton should actually kiss her in the "Somnambula," and Templeton assuring the lady that she might set her heart at rest, for he wouldn't kiss her for all the world—meaning that he wouldn't take such a liberty, of course, because Templeton was a man of the greatest gallantry, and always perfectly polite and chivalrous to the other sex. What Scotchman is not?

About this time Rooke, Balfe's early instructor, produced his opera of "Amalie" at

Covent Garden, which met with the utmost favour, and was really a very pretty opera. Yet, it was said, that he had been upwards of twenty years in trying to have it produced; that seems singular, but is not uncommon; such is the bad taste or caprice of some managers. I have known an opera to be accepted, terms agreed on, and the work absolutely in rehearsal; then, because some other novelty, more to the manager's fancy, was offered, he turned round upon both author and composer, without assigning the slightest cause or reason, why or wherefore, for so doing, and sent both them and their opera hopelessly adrift, without pity, without remorse, stifling, perhaps, the worshipped hopes of years. Bunn, in this respect, also, had a very liberal heart; if, upon a nearer inspection of a work, he had promised an author or composer to produce, as is not unfrequently the case, it proved practically deficient in any respect, he would candidly point these deficiencies out; and, if the party or parties concerned, took

effectual means to remedy them, he produced their work ; if those parties on the other hand, felt themselves unequal to the alteration, as being too practical, he would recommend them where to apply for more experienced aid ; and often has it been my task, with my trowel of dramatic mortar to patch up the delinquency. The great fault of inexperienced writers is, they are so conscientious ; they will give *over* measure.

When

Mr. De Pinna

was about to produce his opera of the “ Rose of the Alhambra,” not the “ Rose of Castille,” at Drury Lane ; it was found, on the stage, somewhat too cumbrous ; the rose hung its head, and was buried under the almost countless numbers of leaves, which

Encumbered the flower,
And weighed down its beautiful head.

It fell to my lot, as head gardener in the establishment, to trim this rose-bush. It required a very delicate and fine-edged pair

of shears, not to touch the buds, of which there were many, very beautiful, and full of fragrance ; some lines about a fountain in particular, were lovely, the author, 'twas said, was Captain Polhill. I trimmed the rose, however, perfectly to the satisfaction of the poet, without shaking off its dew-drops, and so much to the satisfaction of the composer, that De Pinna remarked, it was as if the wand of an enchanter had passed over the work, " everything was gone, yet nothing lost." This sweet opera, was not fated, after all, to be represented at Drury Lane ; from one of those casualties, over which human nature can have no control, it was unavoidably delayed till it became too late in the season, and was eventually produced at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, where it was exceedingly well received. Miss Romer was the rose, Mr. Barker the hero, and Miss Land, (niece of the extraordinary Liston,) the Spirit of the Fountain. The music was greatly admired, and the libretto also ; and

be it understood, I never touched the poetry, the rose remained in all its original freshness, I merely curtailed the leaves. On a similar occasion, I was called in to perform a similar operation on another very pretty opera, at the same theatre, "The Fairy Oak." I confess, when I saw the thickness and felt the ponderous weight of this ancient tree, my heart chilled under the result, not in respect to the audience, but the composer and poet. Like an honest surgeon, however, I fully explained to them the nature of the amputation, which I must perform, to put the patient into a healthy state. They consented, unflinchingly, to undergo it; and the over-fed work, in twenty-five scenes, was returned, reduced to *three*! Yet I never wrote any words, nor touched one syllable of the rhyme; I merely omitted dialogue, and planted the "Fairy Oak," which had been, notwithstanding the title, utterly lost sight of. Here was another instance of *beautiful* poetry, in a libretto, really worthy the pen

of Byron ; but fine poetry *alone*, is not sufficient to make a fine libretto. "The Fairy Oak" spread its beauty-haunted branches *many* nights, the music being greatly encored, and generally approved ; and the author, Mr. Cope, unanimously called for, to bow his acknowledgments, as the *Era* terms it, "from his private box.*" I frequently enquire of myself, how such composers as De Pinna, and the composer of the "Fairy Oak," go to sleep, as it were. Is this another striking example of the great difficulty English artists find in getting their works produced ? That such great difficulty does exist, I have just proved, by what I have related of "Rooke's Amalie."

* At the end of the first act of this opera, I merely hit upon the idea of a fairy-haunted oak tree, which, suddenly expanding its antique branches, let ascend, seemingly, from every bough, innumerable spirits, clad in the lightest pink gauze, dotted with silver, represented by the most beautiful girls, who flew about the stage to the number of eighty. And this tree was executed in the Grieves' most exquisite style.

Barnett,

the splendid composer of the "Mountain Sylph," and various other works of great merit and celebrity, with a proud and proper feeling, I am afraid to think, *disgusted* with the caprice of managers, and the great difficulty of getting his pieces before the public, prefers "the noiseless tenor of his way;" otherwise, how is it, that, for so many years, we have heard little, or in fact, nothing, of this fine composer. Or how is it, that, while we run after every scrap of foreign *anything*, we do not first hunt up the genius of our own country? Poor John Bull! while he swelters his brains to show the finest cow, or sheep, or even ass, or even the finest turkey, or goose, is not national enough, in the right place, to think of showing the finest poet, dramatist, or composer. When

Captain Polhill

became lessee of Drury Lane Theatre, years ago, every one hoped, as he was a

gentleman, and a man of immense fortune, that much would be done to advance the position of English talent; but with all his fortune, without proper experience, his treasury became a cullender, through which the gold filtered itself into undeserving hands, to the loss of seventy thousand pounds, as I have been told, without the slightest advancement, that I now recollect, to the drama, music, or the profession. Amiable and pliant as he was, like Mrs. Parker's elephant, he suffered himself to be led too much by the ear, instead of leading others, for which, like most amiable people, he paid, but too dearly. Another *inexperienced* gentleman, an amateur actor, turned manager, also

Mr. Willis Jones,

in the time of the Rodwells, had been a partner, I believe, in the Adelphi, called then, if I mistake not, the Sanspareil; when that establishment was disposed of to Terry and Yates, after an interval of time, Mr. Jones felt a burning desire within

himself, to turn manager once again. He acted at intervals, "Hamlet," and some other characters of the Shakspearian order, and acted them cleverly too, but to *act* the part of a sole manager, was paramount, as the ambition of young Norval, in his histrionic breast. Withal, Jones was a cautious man, the very reverse of poor Captain Polhill, he watched and waited ten years for the right house in the right place; at length it offered itself, in the Surrey Theatre, where Davadge, who went into it with scarcely a shilling in his pocket, left off, in a few years, possessor of thirty thousand pounds, which proves that a *great* sum of money is *not* the *most* important essential to the success of a theatre. Jones, then, became lessee; it was there I saw him enact "Hamlet," and everything was carried on in the most respectable way; but, like the rooks, (or pigeons,) at Newstead, the residence of Byron, which would only remain in the rookery when certain people dwelt in the Abbey, when Jones became

proprietor of the theatre, so also the public seemed to take flight from that same popular theatre, whose treasury was but recently, a sort of cornucopia, and from whose door, policemen, as we have seen, had been employed to *keep back* the audience. The house became almost deserted: was it not strange? The more so, inasmuch, as Jones was an excellent man, and had every claim to public patronage. Who will deny, after this, that there is not a fatality about theatres? Jones applied to me in the last extremity, as Osbaldiston had done before; I wrote a piece for him; it proved an **UTTER FAILURE**; at least nobody came to see it: it seemed as if some witch had cast a spell over the place. Jones left it, and went to America, and within a short space, the *rooks*, and *pigeons*, also, *returned*. Speaking of those sagacious birds, rooks, it is a curious, but a *real* fact, that the day before the opening of Vauxhall Gardens, the cunning rooks all take flight, never failing to return as speedily, when that

popular place of amusement closes ; this I account for, by their smelling the gunpowder brought in for the display of fireworks, which is, doubtless, anything but pleasant to the olfactory organs of these sapient sable denisons of the air.

I forgot to mention, I believe, amongst my early operatic movements, I perpetrated the poetry, or words of an opera, called "Ninnetta," it was, as everybody knows, a translation of "La Gazza Ladra," adapted by Sir Henry Bishop, for the purpose of introducing Miss Paton to the public, as the Maiden all forlorn, so shamefully wronged, as everybody knows, by the unconscious magpie. It was represented with the utmost success, at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden. Years after this occurrence, Mr. Bunn, wishing to re-produce that opera at Drury Lane, applied to borrow the score of the manager of the other establishment, Covent Garden, which was most peremptorily refused ; the dog in the manger was fully realised. Bishop, who knew very well that

I was a somewhat *fast poet*, did not despair of my being able, from memory alone, to restore the work, or rather to paraphrase it. He wrote to me, therefore ; I was residing then in Peckham ; Bishop did me no more than justice. Next day's post, he had all the opening, and piece by piece, as usual, by post, till the whole was finished.

Madame Albertazzi

was, on this new occasion, the heroine, and a more beautiful representative of the condemned to be hanged for the loss of a silver spoon, never presented itself to tearful eye, or tender heart, than Madame Albertazzi. Her voice was unsurpassable, and, what is more satisfactory, I believe it was English. Her singing *Di Piacer*, is not to be described. But that sweet voice has long since been hushed in death, and is, doubtless, now attuning itself with angels. Poor, lovely Albertazzi died very young, after a brief career, like a bird that sings sweetly beneath our lattice, then takes flight to

more sunny regions, and, by us, is heard no more.

May 17, 1838, a new "*buffa* opera," as the bills called it, entitled "*Diadesté*," made its appearance at Drury Lane. Templeton, H. Phillips, Giubelei, Miss Romer, Fanny Healey, and though last, not least, charming Miss Poole; the music by Balfe; the words by the author of the "*Siege of Rochelle*." There was an exquisitely elegant duetto, in this pleasing little opera,

"*Diadesté*, charming play!"

I marvel concert singers overlook it. A brilliant reception was accorded Mr. Balfe, in "*Diadesté*;" and, I see, owing perhaps, to some engagement of Mr. Phillips, that, eventually, he played that talented gentleman's part himself, (Count Steno.) There was nothing that Balfe could not do. I have heard it said that, once, directing some composition of his own, somewhere abroad, the tenor asserted on the stage, that he had composed an impossible note, at which the

composer stoutly asserted he could sing it himself, and, leaping like a greyhound, out of the orchestra on to the stage, he sang the note with the greatest ease and felicity, at which the distracted tenor, tearing off his hair, (a wig, perhaps,) and tossing it into the pit, rushed out of the theatre; to bring the circumstance to a *truly* dramatic climax, it ought to be, to throw himself into the river, but I will not proceed to such a *denouement*, fine as it is, lest I should wound the always *in-tune* conscience, of my good friend Balfe.

As I have heard it reported that Mrs. Siddons said she would play anywhere if paid, and she might well say so, for wherever genius attracts, genius is surely appreciated, I never refused to write for any manager, who thought me worthy of an engagement; consequently, when that most excellent stage-manager, Mr. William West, who had got up with untiring care, many of my productions at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, transmigrated from the stage

managership of old Drury to Astley's, of which he was once the leading star, and, in fact, continued so, in the undying "Mazeppa." I wrote at his request, several equestrian pieces for that magnificent establishment. I do consider where an author succeeds at Astley's, he displays greater dramatic skill, than when writing at the national houses ; for a very palpable reason, he has neither the assistance of high music, nor high poetry, and has, moreover, to shape his histrionic abilities to the footsteps of horses, in many instances, the more comprehending actors. To be sure the "animals" have four legs to sustain the weight of the drama, upon, while biped-actors have only two. The animals, also, have another recommendation: they never grumble at their parts, nor throw them up, although they very frequently throw a bad actor, and *cast* him to a *level*, which, many, who call themselves actors, richly merit.

I had by me a *tragedy*, with which I thought my friend Bunn would be astounded;

it appeared he was so ; but, certainly not in the way I expected. At the same time, he very politely besought me not to quarrel with him for being of a different opinion from myself. In proportion, as I considered myself clever, you may rest assured, that I felt mortified to the same extent, at the unsparing candour of the great lessee ; and, meeting my friend, West, whose kind heart was, and always is open to sympathy, I confided to him the deep feeling of disappointment, which annoyed me, relating to him at the same time, the interesting story of my *rejected* tragedy. West was instantly struck with the plot ; it pleased his fancy ; it was what he thought he should like to get up ; in fact, it was the very thing for Mr. Batty, (lessee of Astley's,) who was just then in need of a new piece. For a moment, I was startled ; I thought of Macready on horseback, how he would have addressed the Peruvians on a cream-coloured charger, caparisoned all over saddle and bridle, one knotted plume of feathers. I saw in imagination, the fiery and warlike glance of the

great tragedian, lightning flashing from his eyes, as vaulting into the astonished ranks of the detested enemy's army, on a wild Peruvian White Surrey,

He dealt terror to the foe.

As these vast thoughts *galloped* into my imagination, they burst forth *uncurbed* from my lips. West caught the enthusiasm ; till in our loud expressions, I fear to think we, without knowing it, slightly attracted the notice of the passers by, (scene Westminster Bridge) who, taking us for a couple of non-mentals, escaped from a neighbouring asylum, *alias* Bodlam, not far off, had suggested the idea of sending a policeman for our keepers, with a couple of straight jackets, just as we sheered off to the theatre, to decide on the opinion of Mr. Batty, whether the new tragedy was *worthy* his great *menage* or not. The vote was cast in our favour ; and in about a fortnight, Feb. 12, 1849,

Corasco ; or, The Warrior Steed,

Was *mounted* in a way, and a style, I little expected ; and *ran* to my great advantage, upwards, if not more than one hundred

nights. The principal parts by Mr. F. Fredericks, Mr. Johnson, Crowther, and Miss R. Henry; and never in any theatre wherever I rehearsed, did I meet with more attentive actors, or more polite and gentlemanly conduct and attention; nor a better manager, and kinder manageress, than Mr. and Mrs. Batty.

Now, although, my productions at Batty's cover over several years, I think it better to class those pieces altogether in these pages. I succeeded so well with "Corasco," that Mr. Batty, who gave me my own terms, afterwards, retained me to write several other pieces, which were—

"The Prophet."

"The White Maiden of California."

"Marmion."

"Peter the Great."

"Azrael, the Prodigal."*

* In Azrael, we were rehearsing a grand chorus to the Sacred Bull, when the gentlemen of the chorus (who are not, at that theatre, kept lounging on the stage, when they are not wanted) were in request to commence the solemn invocation, they entered somewhat abruptly, for the high priests of Isis; some booted and spurred; some with whips

“ Four Sons of Ayman.”

and afterwards for Mr. Cooke, lessee after Mr. Batty.

Amacosa.

Mr. W. West played the hero of the “Prophet,” the most difficult of parts, exceedingly well, for which he got much commended

in their hands ; one with the curry comb, and some with whips of straw and hay, peace offerings, no doubt, for the blessed Bull, and kneeling down with great earnestness, began to chaunt in energetic voices—

O ! Sacred Bull, &c.

Having proceeded thus far, during a momentary pause, some of them too naturally began *chaffing*, and could not or would not sing in unison. The word bull was *bellowed* out at intervals, individually, not in masses. Seeing the state of the case, and not being *quite* equal to Costa at the baton, I suddenly hit upon a more efficient expedient to produce a harmony. Looking at my watch, I perceived that it wanted only ten minutes of the bell ringing, (by which I had been too frequently interrupted not to recollect) for those gentlemen’s dinners ; therefore, I desired the call boy, seeing Mr. Batty in the ring, to give my compliments to him, and as the vocal gentlemen were so imperfect in their parts, I hoped he would not allow the dinner bell to be rung till I sent him word. As Mr. Batty was a strict disciplinarian, my sagacious chorus knew what would be the effect of the message ; and, when the bell did ring, five minutes after, the grand opera in the Garden could not have boasted a more perfect chorus. Mr. Batty, who enjoyed mightily this *ruse*, sent me afterwards a handsome silver mounted whip, which I’m sure he felt that I *deserved*.

in the papers. It was a character of great study; he proved himself not merely an actor, but an artist; every actor ought to be one mentally, at all events. In the "White Maiden," a scene of startling interest was represented, which I think has never been surpassed. A young man shut up in a cavern, where the bones of the Indians are buried, dreams that, not only the spirits of the dead Indians, but the *horses* which they rode, appear to him. The Indians, clad perfectly in white, mounted on their war steeds, cream coloured every one, rose on traps, the horses as collected and still as the statue at Charing Cross. Talking of horse-taming, think of this.

The representative of "Marmion," a very handsome young man, full of vigour and life, and a splendid rider, was poor Crouther—I say poor Crouther, because eventually he proved so unfortunate. He married Miss Vincent, the celebrated manageress of the Victoria Theatre—that popular "heroine of the *domestic drama*," as she

was justly called. Crouther went to perform at the Victoria as a star, and gallantly paid some compliments to the handsome manageress, for she was still very handsome, which she received in good earnest, for Crouther was very handsome also. The upshot of this was, they agreed to get married. Miss Vincent was rich, and kept her carriage; Crouther, though exceedingly good looking, had only his salary to depend on. The match, therefore, in a worldly sense, was a great elevation to him. They were married, but, strange to relate, even before the bridegroom had quitted the church, he began to show indications of having lost his reason, and was absolutely compelled, in a very short time, to be taken to a lunatic asylum. Some suppose, for he was a very humble-minded young man, that the change for the better in his condition was too much for his intellect. Others assert that there was a forsaken heart, which, for he had great feeling, he could not forget. So it is, that truth is some-

times stranger than fiction. Miss Vincent is since dead ; but her unfortunate husband, I believe, is living.

In "Peter the Great," Mr. Ryder, of the Princess's Theatre, (as a star,) enacted the Czar ; and in the same drama, Mrs. Morton Brooke the other principal character, so admirably, especially in one particular scene, when, in attempting to poison Catherine, she poisons her own son. Had she lived in the days of John Kemble, when such strong acting was the fashion, she would have been considered second only to that great actress Mrs. Siddons.

"Azaël," a paraphrase of my drama so popular at Drury Lane, was famous at Astley's for containing a flock of *real sheep*, which gave to the scene a perfectly pastoral effect.

I was one night at Drury Lane Theatre—it was the first night of a spectacle called "The Desert," (my writing,)—when one of the liverymen came to inform me that *two* ladies were waiting for me in the saloon.

Thinking this a joke practised by Rodwell, who was very fond of a practical joke, I replied, "Let them wait!" At the end of the first act, he came again, and I, all nervous, trembling like a leaf for the success of my piece, told him, somewhat sharply, to go about his business. At the fall of the curtain, however, the applause being unanimous, my agitation wonderfully subsided, and my good temper returned. On going down the great staircase, I said laughingly to the liveryman, "Well, are the ladies tired of waiting?" "Oh dear no, sir, here they are," was his reply, pointing to two ladies, who, closely veiled, seemed most enduringly awaiting my approach; and who proved, on lifting up their veils, to be no others than Mrs. Batty and Mrs. Cooke; the former not having my address, had come, *most kindly*, thinking I should no doubt be at the theatre on the first night of a new piece of my own, especially, to introduce me to Mrs. Cooke, the wife of the new lessee of Astley's, that I might be engaged to write their open-

ing piece. How abashed I felt, it is not easy for the reader to imagine, nor can I at all conceive what possible excuse I made for my rudeness. Mrs. Cooke, a perfect gentlewoman, soon relieved my embarrassment, by saying that her husband, the new lessee, not having yet arrived in London, had deputed her to see me on the subject of their opening spectacle, and no address being to be found, she had hit upon the expedient of coming to the door of Drury Lane Theatre, with Mrs. Batty, who knew me personally, thinking I should pass in that way; but I always entered from the stage, consequently they missed me, and sent the message by the liveryman, which I had repulsed with such tact, as *I thought*. I wrote the spectacle, but although I took the greatest pains with it, and it was beautifully got up, by West, the rooks had left the house with my old friends, the Battys, and it only ran, I think, about fifty nights.

On a similar occasion, previously to the

present, as I had never seen Mr. Bunn in his Shaksperian entertainment, which he gave with so much taste and eloquence, at the St. James's Theatre, I repaired thither, and had scarcely seated myself in one of the stalls, and Mr. Bunn shown himself on the boards, when *another* liveryman came to me, and said a gentleman in a carriage was waiting to speak to me at the door. Reluctant as I was to quit the theatre, lest it should look like an affront to my generous old manager, who, with his quick glance, I saw, with pleasure, recognised me in an instant. A gentleman, (not ladies on this occasion,) in a carriage, anxiously waiting for me, was a somewhat strong inducement. This gentleman turned out to be no less an important personage than Mr. Batty's treasurer, who had been to my house in Batty's carriage to take me to the theatre, and my wife had sent him to the St. James's. I promised to go early in the morning. That would not do ; and I verily believe, if I had not entered the vehicle, the trea-

surer and coachman were commissioned to abduct me. It was about a new piece. The Battys seemed to consider me the only author, and all this from my rejected tragedy, *Corasco*; or the *Warrior Steed*! Of

Mr. Batty

a volume might be written. He was a most extraordinary man, endowed with a natural intellect so bright, and so penetrating, so microscopic, that it would have required a very powerful mind indeed to have deceived him on any point. His calculations were incredible, and his opinions on all subjects so clear, I would have asked it in preference to that of a Lord Chancellor. Yet he owed nothing of this to education. Born in humble circumstances, as a boy, by sheer industry, he worked his way up—purchasing first a horse, then engaging a troupe, then a theatre, till at length he retired from the profession with a good name, worth upwards, it was said, and I hope truly, of half a million of money; he deserved it, which is better. And all this

under ill health. Not by nipping and screwing, but with a generous hand, especially to those whom he considered clever and upright as himself. Of

The Four Sons of Ayman

I have not spoken here. That was a translation, attended with one of the most painful recollections of my curious life, which I will record in its proper place. I mentioned, some pages back, that I was living in a retired cottage in Peckham. The sad fact was, that my dear, affectionate wife had been taken seriously ill with an extraordinary malady—the sudden loss of memory. She scarcely recollected, from time to time, the most familiar events of yesterday, or the people about her, and made wrong answers on the most trifling and important subjects. It may be easily understood what a thunderbolt this proved to me, who loved her so. She who was so mental—so sensible—highly educated—and *such a companion!*—so amiable—*such a wife!*—such a mother! Unwilling that those who had

seen and admired her, so universally, in her clear-mindedness, should witness the tottering wreck it had at once become, I directly furnished and removed to a pretty cottage in Peckham, hoping that quietude, quite away from the town, might, by degrees, restore the tone of her once *fine* mind. I devoted myself, body and soul, to the care of renovating her faculties. I shut myself up from the world with her, and for her. I spared no pains—no assiduities—no money. I consulted the best medical advisers, amongst the rest Doctor Blundell; but with very little avail. In fact, the doctors relinquished her case as hopeless. She had, then, no physician but myself, to depend on. I looked around me for consolation in vain. The only consolation to me was, as a man, I had never deserved this singular and great calamity. But why the blow falls we are not to question. Our duty is to submit, with Christian resignation without murmuring; and, if we can, by the best applications of moral principle to the heart, endure, if

we cannot erase the bruise. The faculty had given her up; they predicted that it was impossible for her to sustain the dreadful shock beyond a few months; more probably a few weeks. The case seemed hopeless, but heaven heard me, and inspired me what course to adopt. By the gentlest means, and indefatigable exertion, I succeeded, slowly indeed, in my endeavour. I renewed her *memory*. I could not bring back robust health, which, in fact, she never really possessed; but I succeeded, with the aid of *God alone*, in restoring her once more to the rational enjoyment of life. I soon perceived that I had made a mistake in taking her into perfect seclusion; added to which, as I could not be absent from her long at a time, I lost all my employment, at a period when it was, alas! most needed. I therefore, once more returned to London, to a more cheerful scene, adjoining the Regent's Park, in the house of Doctor Edwards, a true friend; not that he or any medical man interposed with my system

as regarded my wife's malady. She continued to progress better and better, returned gradually to her old habits, and, after having been given up by the doctors, lived twelve years, restored to her family and to *herself*. The sympathy I received during this affliction, from all sorts of persons, many of them strangers, is something beautiful for the heart to dwell upon. It is only in sorrow that we really know each other; it would be well worth while for every body to become acquainted with sorrow, to find out, under the petals of what simple flowers true feeling and true friendship lie modestly and unflauntingly concealed.

Theatricals seem now going on as badly as myself, as Mr. Murphy,* the weather almanac maker, would have said. I was, however, engaged by Mr. Bunn at the ensuing Easter, to write the Easter piece at

* This Mr. Murphy was so popular for certain predictions he had made about the weather, people seemed to think him more than human. I saw him once at Mr. Bunn's; Mr. Bunn wished to engage him to lecture, on *the stage*.

Drury Lane—"The King of the Mist;" the King of the Mist, Henry Wallack. The principal character, however,

Mr. Compton,

which, as Compton would find it difficult to act anything badly, he did as well as it could be performed. Nothing could have gone better; but, I know not how it is, Easter pieces, in my time, have always seemed out of place, nor have they ever, that I can recollect, brought much money to the treasuries—especially since the time of steam or railways, which, in half an hour, take the people into the pure air of the country, miles distant, or the omnibuses which run nearly at the same rate, to beautiful gardens and parks. It was very different formerly, in the days of "Blue Beard," "Timour the Tartar," "Cherry and Fair Star," and the "Vision of the Sun," when there was no escape from the dense metropolis, but the stuffed-full stage coach, with your legs doubled under you, like a Chinese mandarin: or the still more stu-

pifying hackney carriage. I remember hiring one of these leathern inconveniences, once upon a time, to proceed to Richmond. We were seven hours on the road, broke down three times, and in the end forced to finish the journey on foot in a heavy shower of rain.

Theatricals in a desperate state.

Mr. Rooke produced his opera of "Henrique; or, the Love Pilgrim," with Madame Vestris at Covent Garden. Mr. Bunn, in despair, at the Opera House, tried *Concerts-a-la-Musard*; they turned out a complete failure. Penley opened the English opera with a country company; but closed it in quick time, not taking enough to pay the salaries. We had now at Covent Garden Vestris for Macready, who, notwithstanding his production of those two exquisite plays, the "Lady of Lyons," and "Richelieu," and his own talent thrown into the scale, felt it advisable to sound a retreat; one would scarcely believe it possible. Next, for the spirited Bunn, we had Hammond. If

Mr. Bunn, with all his metropolitan experience and tact, could not make it answer, it was not difficult to foresee that Mr. Hammond, clever as he was, could not; so it turned out in a very short space.

Who came to the English opera, I know not; but I find, by my dateless diary, that I did the words of "Scaramuccia," in which Mr. Balfe enacted the part of Tomaso, and Miss Rainforth, Sandrina, the best thing I ever saw her play. There was excellent comic music in this opera. Her comic talent surprised every one. I wonder some of the wandering minstrels don't revive this *petite* opera. Surely it would be a great relief to the knelling "Trouvatore," and the hectic "Traviata," beautiful as they are. I wrote also, an opera for J. Hatton, (entitled "Pascal Bruno,") who, not being able to get it represented, and not having the patience of Rooke, to wait twenty years, took it over to Germany, had it translated into that language, and, on returning, brought me a play bill, thinking that I should be

sufficiently delighted, and perfectly satisfied (as I was forced to be) at seeing my name Herr *Fizball* inserted as the English author of the libretto. Hammond opened with a very effective spectacle, "The Fairy Lake," by Selby, if I recollect rightly, and it ran many nights, but wanted the aid of other novelties. He, Mr. Hammond, did me the favour to apply to me, and proposed the subject of "Auld Robin Grey;" but, before I had commenced operations, he had relinquished the management; I should think, most gladly; I afterwards transformed "Auld Robin Grey" into an operetta, for Alexander Lee, who composed the music. For one song alone, Dalmaine's people paid him two hundred pounds. "The beautiful smile of the Auld Man's Wife." Mr. Macready consented to bring this piece out on some occasion, at Drury Lane, and underlined it, but, such were the changes, it was not after all produced; I can't recollect, unless from the variations of the dramatic needle, why, for, on looking into the M.S., I

perceive some pencilled remarks in Mr. Macready's own hand writing :—

A succession of troubles—my wife's bad health, the first and greatest, the frightful state of theatricals, and a combination of disappointments about this time, had plunged me into innumerable difficulties, from which I saw no escape, so heavy and so threatening were the clouds, on every side around me. Willing, persevering, industrious as I was, I could scarcely keep up my heart ; and many and oft, when memory returned to the days of my youth, did I regret even the plough, and the harrow, for which I felt such an early contempt ; but my sufferings were not for myself, as may very naturally and charitably be understood. It was in this frame of mind, that I met in Regent Street my very kind, and good friend, Captain Middleton, R.N., he was in mourning, and when I enquired after his intellectual wife, he told me, with deep emotion, that he had lost her ; but she had remembered me in her will ! Me ! How extraordinary, at such

a moment ! It seemed like the manna which the angels threw down from heaven ; and came as perfectly unlooked for. And he, with a most kind impulse, for I was never the man, I was far too proud to go about with a tale of necessity, paid me the money almost immediately, little thinking, *perhaps*, the good he was doing ; though I'm sure, with the heart to do it.

Mrs. Middleton.

Mrs. Middleton, it should be recollected, was *the* Miss Scott, of the Sans Pareil, before it fell into the hands of the Rodwells—who, by her *uncommon* genius, both as a poetess and an actress, attracted great sums of money to that theatre. She sang sweetly, and with the utmost science, having been a pupil of Dr. Arne. As a woman, in her every-day life, she had every domestic virtue. As a companion, the *naïveté* of her conversation, abounding with wit and elegance, was like a sparkling stream, which every moment glittered with some new sunbeam. Added to this, she was divested of any

thing like jealousy of another's repute ; a worshipper of genius, and never thought she could do too much in its behalf.

A sweet little cherub sits perch'd up aloft,
To keep watch for the life of poor Jack.

I now see a variety of efforts "to spring my bark ashore," "Oconesto" at the City Theatre, with Mr. Gladstone, an excellent gentleman, formerly one of the proprietors of the Adelphi, in the sunny days of the "Pilot." Then comes the "Negro of Wapping," with Mr. Parry, at the Garrick ; this was what I call "bobbing around" with a vengeance. Next of all, "Charlotte Hanwell," at Sadler's Wells. The kindest, sincerest of managers, was Bob Honnor, as he was affectionately called by all who had the happiness to know him : the part of Charlotte by

Mrs. R. Honnor.

In fact, the *real* heroine of "the domestic drama," (after Miss Kelly,) now, I lament to say, a widow. A step back, and I find myself again on the old familiar boards of

Covent Garden, with Madame Vestris, and that versatile scion of all that ever was comic, Charles Matthews. Of Charles Matthews, one might write six volumes, and then find there were six more to write, if you had not previously died in a convulsion of laughter. I always called him the theatrical eel, with the golden skin, of which no sooner had he been flayed, than another golden skin grew, and again he was flayed—but he was used to it, and skipped about after each operation better than ever. But, not to digress, “Hans of Iceland” of which (connected with Mr. Knowles) I have already spoken, was splendidly mounted. No expense was spared in the production by Madame, to whose refined taste, the English stage owes its present attention to detail. In this piece, Payne enacted “Hans of Iceland;” and, considering, the great pantomimist he is, I need scarcely say, admirably! Mr. Gilbert also, and his wife, formerly the lovely Miss Ballin, with the two Ridgeways, who played

the scene so interesting to Knowles. But the enormous expense attending this production, (as is always the case) although, it certainly went with acclamations, proved a fearful drawback to its having a decided run. It required the nightly assistance of eighty carpenters to change the last scene. It could not, therefore, pay; and, as my remuneration was nightly, I sincerely believe that Madame Vestris and Charles Matthews played it, to a loss, my stated number of nights, that I might come off with, not only the credit, but the gains which they appeared to think me so deserving of.

Ancient Concerts.

The engagement I had been appointed to, by the select committee, as poet, at these fine concerts, patronized by Her Majesty, conducted by Sir Henry Bishop, now occupied much of my time; and, as the subjects on which I wrote, where all, either classic or religious, they claimed much of my *serious* attention. The personages I had now to please, were of the very highest

order and distinction. Corales, and concerted pieces, from the most ancient authors, had to be construed with the utmost care and delicacy. What a different school from that in which I had so recently practised ; yet I had the great pleasure, both of success and commendation ; and that in the *very highest* quarter. My various poems were inserted in the books of the different evening performances, and are, I have no doubt, in the library of Buckingham Palace, at this moment, and will be, probably, when the humble hand which wrote them, has ceased to write. I have had the happiness to hear my Corales encored, in that room, (where seldom encores occurred,) before Her Majesty, His Royal Highness, the Queen's Consort, and the room filled only with princes, dukes, duchesses, and the highest aristocracy, yet not too high to applaud. Contrast this courtly and brilliant scene, with others of a very minor description, which I have rendered a few pages back, compare the difference, and I think

even my enemies, but I hope I have ceased to have any, must admit that, at least, even when *not* dramatic, I possessed the felicitous art of suiting myself to my audience. I remained poet to these exquisite concerts, several succeeding years ; in fact, till they ceased to be performed.

“ Jane Paul,” the “ Trooper’s Horn,” and the “ Miller’s Wife,” dramas of interest, occupy here, their brief space, like road-side daisies, which we admire as we pass ; but the “ Miller’s Wife ” is worthy of a more important commendation ; it was decidedly the best part ever sustained by Miss Vincent. She played this more than two hundred nights. I hope the reader, ere this, will have perceived, in order to render these memoirs palatable and untiring, and the less to show the dreary and egotistical reiteration of the first personal pronoun, I have contrived, to make my narrative run on as much as possible, resembling a smooth stream, down which as we glide, the lotus flower, the

springing trout, and the purple and gold wing of the bounding king-fisher, break away attention from the sleepy monotony of the current. This is my excuse for the characters introduced; they are my lotus flowers, my glittering trout, my purple and gold-wing'd birds; figures, whose counterparts, on the Indian screen, render its dark back-ground *more* effective, and *less* sombre.

I scramble on, here, to an opera, of the libretto of which I was the sole inventor.

Këolanthè,

produced on March 9, 1841, was one of my dream-revels with imagination—a flight across golden deserts with the Queen of Fancy. It does not follow, however, that it must prove the most successful; flights of invention, generally outstrip the comprehension of general auditors; like the ascent of Mahomet to the seventh heaven, they are very confusing, and, not unfrequently, the radiant, and perfumed feathers of your wings drop off, before public comprehension begins to beam. This

proved the case decidedly with "Këolanthè." Mr. Balfe had taken the English Opera ; become a manager ; Mr. Balfe, in the orchestra, is a *magician* ; in management, we require a conjuror ; far be it from me to insinuate that my excellent Balfe is no conjuror, I have elevated him high above that ; I have crowned him a *magician*, and the difference is, the magician moves mountains larger than the Alps, and raises palaces of opal and pearls, by the mere waving of his wand ; while your conjuror, like him of the Lyceum,* only deceives your eyes with *tricks*, not invented by himself, and, which everybody knows to be a deception. Yet, for a manager of a theatre, your tricks, and traps, are far more in request to carry on the war, than even the sublime influence of a Prospero.

This "Këolanthè" is unquestionably, the best of Balfe's operas, that is to say, his *finest original* conception, and advances nearer to

* Anderson, the celebrated conjuror.

the stars. "Këolanthè," the heroine, is somewhat beyond a girl, being, at the commencement of her first appearance on any stage, at least, three thousand years old. And, although, to question the age of a lady, especially after a doubtful period, is at all times a great deviation from the strict rules of chivalry, yet, as I possessed a spell beyond Atkinson's "Bloom de Ninon," to dissolve her wrinkles, restore her to beautiful youth, to enhance the value of my prescription, (especially should I insert it in the Times,) I may be forgiven by the sex, I hope, for thus disclosing the age of my Heroine of the Pyramids.

Madame Balfe

was Këolanthé; the dignity of the princess, was nothing lost in her; the splendour of her voice, the richness of her attire, the fineness, the grandeur of her acting, (she was a *great* actress, realizing to my imagination, all I had heard related of "Clairon,") the supernatural manner which she assumed, took everyone by surprise,

while her *deep-thought* conception of the part seemed to set everyone *thinking*, (a mental requisite, at that time, never over resorted to by English artists, in general, who seemed to imagine the putting on of a Roman toga, made you a Roman, or that a large pair of brown hollands transformed you into a Dutchman). Wilson, a fine tenor, was the student Andréo; Stretton and H. Phillips, Fillippo and Ombrastro—Miss Gould, Pavina.

This opera cost, in the getting up, with its exquisite costumes and scenery, much more than a thousand pounds; it certainly had a tremendous reception; the stage covered over with wreaths of flowers, amongst which stood Madame Balfe, like Iris, with her offerings of garland lotuses at her feet.

The Earl of Westmorland.

As the curtain fell, I was passing through the lobby, to effect my escape, when lo, and behold, up comes running another of the box-keepers, telling me that my Lord

of Westmorland, now Earl, had sent his compliments, and requested to speak to me. Incredulous, as I had not the honour to possess the least knowledge of his lordship, I told the man that he must have made an egregious mistake. At that moment, up came his lordship, with all that air of noble affability, which is so peculiar to him, and so indicative of true greatness. "No," said he, "Mr. Fitzball, the man is *not* mistaken, I *wish* to speak with you; I *wish* to congratulate you in unqualified praise, on the amply deserved success of your new opera." I did not thank his lordship, but simply replied, evasively, "The *music*, my lord, is really charming."

"And the *poem* of which I now speak, equally so." At an expression, so frankly used, I *did*, most gratefully, thank this nobleman, because there was no mistaking his sincerity. At the same time, such a compliment, from such a great person, so highly educated, with his refined and travelled taste, was something indeed for me,

in my humble position, to be proud of; from that hour to this moment, a truer and a kinder friend I do not possess in the world, than the gracious Earl of Westmorland.

In a *few* evenings, Her Majesty, and His Royal Highness, the Prince Consort, came also, to hear the opera, condescendingly, and graciously passing through a narrow passage, hastily opened, to their box, scarcely wide enough for one person at a time. I must say that they appeared exceedingly interested at the development of the plot; the most flattering approval was conferred on the music; nor was the poet forgotten. The book, I was told, pleased mightily, especially from its Germanic construction. This opera has since been translated into German, and produced in Berlin.

To show what a creature of impulse Balfe was, they were one morning rehearsing an opera, by Edward Loder, when I happened to enter the theatre, and standing somewhat apart, P.S. I am always very diffident of encroaching where I have no

business, although during my own rehearsals I have frequently found myself surrounded by *strangers*, especially at the Theatres Royal, of whom, or their business there, I had not the remotest notion ; but, seeing there was only a singing sort of rehearsal going on, as if everybody's ears had been fastened by an invisible string, to the piano-forte, as the opera was coming out in a night or so, upon the privilege of friendship with the manager, I ventured, without a word, to take the hand of Madame Balfe and lead her into the position she would have to occupy at night. They had forgotten all about the acting part, singers generally do ; this simple movement, however, produced such a salutary effect, that every one, on the stage, involuntarily extended his or her hand, to be led into a position also. This circumstance caused not only me, but all present, to laugh heartily. It was a concerted piece, and when I said " Now, strike up !" Balfe gave a stunning blow on the piano, enough to

crack every string within it, and the effect of the combined voices flowing and harmonising from their right distances, made *all* the difference. "Stop a bit!" said Balfe, when it was over, and seizing a pen, he hastily wrote something on a large piece of paper, then abruptly disappeared with it into the green-room. In a few minutes he returned, like a man that has done some great conscientious duty, smiling as nobody ever did, or could smile, but Balfe, for, he always seemed to me, to have a succession of smiles, lurking one under the other, like circles in a sunny lake.

I was very speedily told what this mysterious document contained, it was—"Mr. Fitzball is to be looked on, in this theatre, like myself," &c. In fact, I was appointed manager, which honour I modestly but *gratefully* declined; I say *gratefully* declined, because had it been an appointment to the Lord Chancellorship, Balfe would have conferred it with the same enthusiasm. He had a generous *Irish*

heart, much too warm for the heart of a manager, because, as I have invariably found, to my deep mortification and regret, business and impulses are invariably counteractions.

I am not inflicting a history of the drama of the last half century, heaven forbid but it seems to me, as if at this interval managers were dancing a quadrille. It is rather difficult to find, or remember their whereabouts. Macready, however, was at Drury Lane. I wrote for him an operetta called "The Queen of the Thames," and although a trusty and most *common-sensed* friend of mine remarked facetiously, "What a capital opera that would have been had the music been left out." The songs, by J. Hatton, were exceedingly pretty, and full of melody ; but music was never the order of any theatre managed by a tragedian, any more than tragedy was the order of a theatre managed by a singer. A manager ought to be neither. Still "The Queen of the Thames," (Miss Romer,) proved very

successful, and ruled the waves for many nights.

John Wilmot.

Of all the prompters and stage directors in my time, he was the *truest to an author*—a rare qualification, for they are all too fond, the very best of them, of ascribing the merits of any piece to their own getting up, seldom allowing the poor devil of an author to venture an opinion on the best way of producing his own work. Here, again, the French are *ages* before us. But things are not so ferocious in this respect as they were formerly in England. I have seen combustions of this kind take place, from the *over cleverness* of stage managers, as would scarcely be credited by inexperienced ears.

Years ago, I wrote “*Der Freschütz*” for the Surrey; it was quite a different version from the opera, being a decided melodrama. The theatre, then, belonged to a family of the name of Johnson, who *kept the public house* next door; their head *waiter* acting as

a sort of manager ; they were excellent people, and paid *uncommonly* well, it being to their interest, on account of the sale of spirits, &c., in their bar, to keep the house open, they understood little, indeed, about the affairs of stage management ; I was therefore, to get up my own "Der Freschütz." All went on swimmingly, I don't mean to be satirical by *swimmingly*, when, as if to put in a great idea to assist me, in my undertaking, the head waiter hit upon the clever expedient of having a set of *real* Germans to *lend a hand*, as he called it. Accordingly, arrives on the stage, four *hares*, as the waiter called them, (herrs) bearded up to the eyes, and for *hares*, they looked the ugliest set of *hounds* I ever gazed on. But one of them was the original Casper ; and I'm afraid to remember, at the head of this startling reinforcement, was my kind old friend and first operatic master, Mr. Hawes, the King's lutist, who, speaking with all respect, apart from his piano, knew as little about O. P. and P. S., as I did of

sharps or flats ; he was, however, only the envoy. Well, I said nothing, and the rehearsal began. The utility of these Germans may be imagined, when it comes to be explained, that not one note of Weber's music was introduced, except the Huntsman's and Bridal choruses, and the drama, an original one, quite different from their own. They not knowing English, we not knowing German, an extraordinary confusion ensued. I very soon found that I knew nothing about it, and, therefore, sat quietly down to take a lesson on my own production. Imitating my example, every one concerned except the FLARES, sat down, to take a lesson also ; Mrs. Young (Mrs. Honey's mother) played Agnes, and began to show her resentment ; but I besought her to be tranquil, otherwise we should never witness the final *grande tableau*. At length, our allies began to get into terrible confusion themselves ; they could not proceed unless I proceeded first—like the shadow, they could have followed ; but I had become spiteful, and refused ; so

they went on, and on, delineating nothing, till it came to the incantation scene, where they sadly stuck ; not knowing exactly anything of the *underground* part of the plot about the churchyard lead, or the casting of the balls. The prompter wickedly proposed getting rid of them, by letting them down the trap with the stove, but that I stoutly refused to sanction. A dead stop was the result. Now arrived the acting manager, with two or three pewter pots on each thumb, the *Herrs* brightened up at this, seeing the pewter, they imagined that the churchyard lead had actually arrived to their aid. A very different result awaited them ; the head waiter, with all the tact of business, soon discovered his error, and finding things at a standstill, caused, very quickly, in language, which, luckily for themselves, the Germans did not understand, although the interpreter did, a decided clearance of Casper, and his friend, Zamiel, who vanished without the aid of either blue or red fire, in a twinkling. Again the piece

went on, and was acted some hundred and twenty nights ; and Elliston, who succeeded to the management, revived and played it many nights more. In fact, it was my first business acquaintance with the great comedian, Robert William Elliston, Esq.

But as this was now merely a minor, and a mismanaged theatre, it did uncommonly well, considering its pretensions. I shall relate another anecdote of a similar kind at a Theatre Royal, no less than the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Julian had become the Lessee of this establishment ; "The Maid of Honour,"* Balfe's music, my libretto, was in rehearsal. We had something like six stage-managers, all men of the greatest talent ; one could draw comic characters with his pen ; another swallow an orange whole ; another could tell whether Julius Cæsar wore a *brutus* or not ; some directing orally ; some directing silently. What, on earth, could have surpassed such a *compact arrangement* ? Three known, three unknown, stage directors ; one the most

The English "Martha."

mysterious, in green spectacles ; and enough was there for them to do. Two hundred soldiers on the stage, having no idea what they were there for ! in fact, the stage was so beautifully full, to produce a grand effect, that it was almost necessary for poor Miss Birch, the *prima donna*, to come up a centre *trap*, the crowd was so great. The most imposing sounds heard of the grande opera, were the somewhat discordant and contradictory notes of the three *literary* men, and the orange swallower, at the tops of their voices, *do—don't*. In vain, poor disconsolate Balfe, like the knight of the woful countenance, knocked his baton on the new grand piano, and Mr. Thomas Chappel, the purchaser of the music, who had come to select the rich and pungent morceaus of the opera, cast an eye, of somewhat regret, upon the battered instrument, such an eye, as the worthy Isaac of York is supposed, by Sir Walter Scott, to have cast on the armour of Ivanhoe, during the combat, his heart beating at every thrust it received from the grim assailant, lest

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every bruise should lessen its value. At length, the *six* brought things to such a combustion, that it was necessary to call for the parish engine, or the author, the greater *dampener* of the two; while the music purchaser, who felt as if he had holes in the toes of his varnished boots, and the sovereigns in his pant-pockets were forcing their way inside, down those peculiar garments, to effect their terrified escape at the aforesaid outlets, began also to chime in with the general call for the *culprit*, that is to say, more properly speaking, the unhappy author. The author reiterated Balfe; the author, reiterated the *six*; author murmured the two hundred soldiers, curious, no doubt, to see if an author were a horse or a currycomb, or whether they were to attack him with their bayonets. That was the first time I had the honour to be universally called for on the stage. Thinking, perhaps, that they might be going to toss me in a blanket, as the Egyptians were accustomed to torture an innocent victim, to appease the fury of the storm-gods, I stood

a little apart shivering, and said nothing. This, strange to say, produced a general silence ; a circumstance which induced the three *silent* managers to consider, in their own minds, that, after all, there was nothing like the author. Frightened out of my wits, I did venture to say, however, if the vocal parts of the opera were rehearsed at one time, and the military, with their iron heeled boots, marching, at another, it would be, probably, more to the advantage of both ; this was carried, unanimously ; the soldiers marched off O.P., the music proceeded, and the speaking *three* retired ; one to draw a die-of-laughing sketch for the pantomine ; the other, to swallow *two* whole oranges, to the perfect astonishment of the ballet girls in the second green-room ; and number three, hurried to the British Museum, to make still deeper researches into the bottom of Julius Cæsar's wig.

Peace restored, music, “bewitching music,” once more, like the robin at the window, descended to participate in our

crumbs of comfort—Sims Reeves was himself again ; all the half-shades of his notes told, like the finest vibration of a railway whistle, heard through the amber-scented mouthpiece of evening, twenty miles distant. Balfe's cheeks reassumed their appley form. Chappel's toes of his varnished boots seemed stitched up by fairy hands, while the resuscitated sovereigns began to reascend, like sparkling beewings, to the brim of his pocket ; and the author, now forgot, fell back, like the snail when the rain is over, into his dreamy shell again.*

Balfe told me, not long since, that he

* Keeping up one's dignity, under peculiar circumstances, is very difficult. I remember an anecdote, an old one, of a country schoolmaster, who, being patronised by a *real* lord, during the election, invited his lordship, in return for his vote, to investigate his school. The lord, in due time, arrived at the school, and, to the infinite terror of the boys, who had all had their hair cut, walked through the school-room stiffly enough with his hat on. The master, however, walked *before*, still more stiff than his lordship, with his *hat on* also. When they left the apartment the poor master, most obsequiously doffing his hat, begged his lordship's pardon ; adding, as an excuse, " If any of my boys had conceived for an instant the possibility that there could be a greater man than myself, I should for ever have lost my ascendancy."

always considered "The Maid of Honour" his most finished performance. He is, or ought to be the best judge of that, although we are very few of us best judges of ourselves. The public are the truest, sincerest judges, after all: they never flatter, and always approve without prejudice; so long as they are with me, I care little for individual opinion. The public seemed mightily pleased with this new opera; the plot, in particular, was exceedingly amusing. "We come when you ring the bell," and the "Arm Chair," were *gems* of admirable *setting*.

Mr. Sims Reeves

never played, or sang better than in the young farmer, which he looked to perfection; where he loses his mind, how truthful he was to character. The house melted into tears, while he, so touchingly, poured forth, from the deepest recesses of his heart, that popular cavatina—"In this old chair my father sat."

Mr. Weiss

was by no means far behind him in excellence, both as to singing and acting. Never were two more proper young farmers seen at statute fair.

Miss Birch,

also, as the pretty and accomplished serving-maid, exerted herself to the utmost. Her fine, finished voice told amazingly in the "Red Cross Knight," and "Breathe not the secret here." How charmingly she looked in the Masque. And Madame Weiss as Queen Elizabeth, and Miss Miran as Apollo—how melodiously and gracefully they gave finish to the scene. For my share of this opera, I received a certain sum on the first night, but if it continued to run till it reached twenty-five nights, I was to receive an additional sum of fifty pounds. On the twenty-fourth night it was stopped, and succeeded by "Lucia di Lammermoor." It was very mortifying to come so near the mark ; but, like a losing

gamester, I was compelled to chew the cud of disappointment, and put a good face upon the matter. The publisher was the apparent winner. It so happened, however, that the race had not ended; for at night Madame Dorus Gras was taken ill, and the manager had no alternative, but to play "The Maid of Honour," which completed my term of nights. And be sure that the snail was not slow in creeping out of his shell, to refresh himself with this golden shower; which, I must add, was accorded with a *most willing* smile. But I have always found, in that same worthy publisher, a most pliant and excellent friend, under trying circumstances, where sympathy was a more valuable balm, than money could have purchased. Of those gentlemen — the Beals, the Chappels, and Addison, proprietors of nearly all my operatic works—I cannot speak in measured terms: there seemed but one liberality amongst them — not to forget Jeffries, himself a capital poet, Leader, and Brewer, though last, not

least. I should say, for these worthies, and several others, I have written at least five hundred, or more songs and ballads. One charge I have to bring against them of unfairness, which is, in their advertisements they invariably omit the name of the poet. Had they generally inserted my name in the advertisements, to my numerous ballads, as well as that of the composers, by an accidental glance at the *Times* I *might* have been *seen* as well as heard of, and the awkward circumstance I am now about to relate never have occurred. Speaking of ballads, although it transpired but recently, I think I cannot record an anecdote on that subject in a better place. One day, dining with no less a personage, than that most esteemed and valuable friend of mine —

Sir William de Bathè, Bart.,

he, who takes a *great* anxiety in my interest, which anxiety, as may naturally be concluded, is a kind and disinterested one, in expressing his indulgent approval of some poetry of mine in a work I had recently

published, entitled "*The House to Let*," expressed surprise that I did not write for some of the magazines. My reply was that I doubted if any of the editors of the magazines had heard my name, and that I felt assured not one of them would pay me the slightest attention, even if I sent them an article—especially a poetical one. Sir William was positive in his opinion, and called it affectation on my part; therefore, merely to convince *him*, more than otherwise, the next day, at Hookham's library, Bond Street, I requested a number of a magazine, to find out how to address a letter to an editor. It was curious enough, the very first leaf I opened, contained an essay on the present ballad-writers of England. This looked very like a presage of good: the Romans and Athenians would have hailed it as a certain omen of victory. Events sometimes go by contraries. The essay in question enumerated almost every scrap of song in the kingdom; but not *one word* of poor, unknown, never-

heard-of, (as I had predicted,) Fitzball. It is no more startling than true, that some of my songs, for instance—"My Pretty Jane," "When I beheld the Anchor Weighed," "Let me like a Soldier fall," and many others, had become almost national—had been sung everywhere where the English language is spoken, even in the trenches of the Crimea, accompanied by the thundering of cannon, and the bursting of shells. Yet *this* reviewer, who took upon himself to let the know-nothing public into all the secrets of ballad beauty, and their gems, had never, by the slightest chance, heard of me, or of my songs. He had heard, however, of *one* Thomas Moore; but, he had, also, heard of *a poet*, insinuatingly said to be, if not equal, at a very little distance behind the inspired author of *Lalla Rookh*—a Mr. Trumps, from whose songs numerous, and I acknowledge *beautiful*, were the quotations in the essay. Although, by way of confessing the *truth*,

I was too conceited to think them, in any respect, superior to my own; I thought this would have perfectly satisfied my friend Sir William; but he was inflexible, and nothing would appease him, but my writing a letter of remonstrance to the editor. I did so; simply stating that I felt a *little* hurt at being so utterly lost sight of, in his article on ballad writing. I begged to let him know that I had published *several* songs, which, by their immense sale, I concluded, met with the approval of the world; amongst them the aforesaid "Pretty Jane," which, after having gone through innumerable editions, and twenty years singing, and was singing, as popular as ever, at that time, by Mr. Sims Reeves, had been *resold*—that is, the copyright, to Messrs. Goulding and D'Almaine for £500 sterling. Therefore, judging from *results*, without being liable to be taxed with egotism, I hoped he would consider it was rather an omission in his essay, at least, a *trifling* omission, to have

overlooked me. To this I expected a castigating reply, or a still more annoying silence. Sir William was right. The effect was quite the reverse: most explanatory, and most gentlemanly. Let the writer speak for himself; it is a *startling disclosure*. Read the editor's letter:—

“ MY DEAR MR. FITZBALL,—

“ I have just received your letter. You
“ have an undoubted right to complain. I
“ regret the omission, but was not aware of
“ it until you pointed it out. The paper in
“ question was written by *Mr. Trumps him-*
“ *sely*, and though I certainly read the
“ proof, I did so very hastily—too hastily,
“ and so lost an opportunity, which, I
“ assure you, I would gladly have availed my-
“ self of, of saying a kind word of one who
“ at various times, and on various occasions,
“ whether as song writer, or dramatist, has
“ afforded me *so much* pleasure. But an
“ opportunity *will* occur of repairing this

“ omission ; if not, / will make one, and

“ do you justice. With good wishes,

“ Believe me,

“ Very truly yours,

“ —————.”

On reading this most gratifying letter, written by one of the first literary men, I cordially, from the depths of my heart, forgave Mr. Trumps his forgetfulness ; for, after all, it was perhaps forgetfulness, (we poets, all of us, are at times very lost and abstracted,) and I, on my part, cast a laurel to his genius, too bright to require the aid of self-commendation.

“ Mary Melvin,” a drama at the Adelphi, brings back forcibly to my remembrance that most lady-like and fascinating actress,

Mrs. Yates.

It has always been a matter of regret to me, much as I desired it, that I never hit upon a part worthy of that lady's talent in any of my numerous Adelphi dramas, especially as she took such pains to render

what I did effective, as in "The Earthquake," "Mary Melvin," &c., &c. Buckstone carried the palm from me there, in his "Wreck Ashore," "Victorine," &c., he identified the pieces with Mrs. Yates, she *was* Victorine, *the* Victorine; I never saw any other actress who could approach her in Victorine. In her acting, a little reserved, perhaps; but in her, that was a beauty, like the faint blush, on what is called the maiden rose; she was so feminine, a qualification in women, which I always adored. Inasmuch as I detest an effeminate man, so I always feel disgusted with a masculine woman, even on the stage. Mrs. Yates as Rosalind, was perfection; her Lady Teazle, in the "School for Scandal" has left no equal. I'm afraid, in my time, I shall not look on her like again.

She has gone from our gaze,
Like a bird from the bough—

with many others, whose loss I do not see replaced. Her son, I hear, is one of our best *farce* writers; the intellect of the

father and mother, will naturally enough burst forth in the son; the glow-worm of glow-worms will shine! It is the nature of glow-worms: who is to prevent it? I might add a hope that he would not leave himself to depend on stage-writing, or the stage; but how can a delinquent like me, presume to offer advice to others? I, who in my own early days, dashed back the lightnings of admonition on Jove, himself. An old letter here, presents itself to my eyes, written years ago, to me, by Frederick Yates Esq., the father of the above; I insert it merely to prove what reliance he placed on me, and when you come to recollect what a *highly* intellectual man he was, a letter like this is something for a *practical* author to be proud of, just after the manager has read his new, and that a *very dangerous* piece, to the company.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—

“ I read to-day, with *good effect*; pray
 “ be particular about the snatches of songs
 “ for Mrs. Fitz; Miss Glover too, must have

“ *two* ballads. Do what you can for Mr.
“ Downe ; he will call upon you. Look in
“ *daily* at the Adelphi, and the property
“ room.

“ Yours faithfully,

“ Frederick Yates.”

The interpretation respecting the vulture, means, the piece was called the “ Black Vulture,” which somewhat astounding part fell to O. Smith ; what was more astounding, he never grumbled, which I took to be a bad omen ; (it proved otherwise.) This piece was so truly outrageous and imaginative. I was rather afraid ; but it had now become the fashion, both with the performers and the public, to anticipate these sort of desperations from my pen—they expected it. O. Smith had to descend in the very first scene, as an enormous vulture, from the summit of a gigantic mountain, at the foot of which, Hemmings, as a heart-crushed slave, was chained to the rocks, and doomed, *unceasingly to turn a ponderous iron wheel, which washed gold into the*

stream on which he toiled. What an anticipation of the diggings. It may seem ridiculous to the reader, but the effect was most extraordinary, and when the vulture *made a long speech*, you might have heard a pin fall in that crowded house. I think it will be naturally understood, that the vulture, who, in his flights over the mountain, had witnessed the misery of that poor despairing slave, was no other than Lucifer, who is constantly on the look out, come to offer a change. This change, goaded on by the iron wheel, which gnawed into the slave's soul, was of course accepted; when the desolate rocks changed into the sparkling pilasters of a sumptuous palace, the hard iron mill, into a silken ottoman, and the wretched rags of slavery became a blaze of refulgent jewels, the result is not difficult to be guessed; and the vulture, himself, laughed in triumph: as O. Smith, alone could laugh. I produced, also, at the Adelphi Theatre, "Alma," a burlesque on an opera of that name, and "Ondine,"

both of which succeeded, and were played in many theatres; in the latter,

Mr. Wright

played for me, whose comic talent is enough to make a piece. Since the days of Liston, there has been nothing to remind you of him, like Mr. Wright. Speaking of Liston and Wright, conjures up in my mind, as is no wonder, a comical incident, which would serve the latter as a farce. Being at Brighton last summer, I took it into my head that I would go one Sunday morning, to the Pusyeite church and see the ceremony. The pews are all open and long, and my place being at the further end, behind a column, I could neither see nor hear; however, kneeling down when the rest knelt down, I contrived, like too many others, to keep up a devotional outward appearance, when suddenly, and in an instant, I felt myself enveloped in darkness, like a candle expiring under an extinguisher. I thought that my time was come, that I had fallen into a fit; and making, what I

considered, my death struggle, was soon enlightened by a lady, who had entered without seeing me, lifting up, in some confusion, her crinoline, under which she had inadvertently ensconced me. Who, after this can deny, that fact is not more strange than fiction, only fancy Wright under Mrs. F. Mathews' crinoline, picture his supplicating look, and her overpowering indignation.

1843. It appears to me that Mr. Bunn, now once again, ascends the dramatic throne, and is again in the ascendant at Drury Lane. No sooner is the sceptre in my old manager's hand, than I am, without the least solicitation on my part, thanks to his kind remembrance, in my old position, of reader to the theatre. This is a place of *great trust*, the meaning of which is to the unsophisticated, to read carefully all M.S.S. sent in for acceptance, more especially by unknown authors; the works of *known* authors, I always stipulated for the managers to read themselves, as it might have brought about a jealousy, and a painful

feeling to both parties, viz, the author reading, and the author read. The great advantage of a reader in a theatre is, that no M.S. *can be lost*. It is the duty of the reader, if it will not serve the interest of the establishment, or is unactable, to punctually return a M.S. *kindly*, and with *thanks* to the author; and if that be possible, *without wounding his feelings*. I have read as many as two hundred different pieces, during a season, not one of which could possibly have suited the establishment; but where I saw the *slightest* chance, I always most strenuously urged the manager to *peruse* it. Some M.S.S. wanted one thing, some another; most of them wanted *practicability*, others were unsuited to the occasion, and many too stupid, for any theatre.

We opened again with the "Siege of Rochelle," and that, most lovely of all ballets, "The Peri," the Peri, (in perfection,)

Carlotta Grisi,

that most lovely of dancers, and the most Peri-like, and agile. In one particular scene, she absolutely seemed to *fly down* from the top of the stage to the bottom, into the arms of her lover, (Pettipas,) which effect appeared so real, and it was *no* trick, that every night her flight was encored. She absolutely did throw herself fearlessly down, descending on the tips of her toes, as lightly as a bird. My first duty, for I was not merely engaged as reader, was to translate and adapt the words of Donizetti's opera of "La Favorite," in which the great French tenor,

Mons. Duprez,

had been engaged to sing. His first appearance, however, was in "Guillaume Tell," in which, with his exquisite voice, and pure style, he made a most powerful sensation, despite of several annoyances occurring during the evening; in the first place, Leffler, who played Tell, was dead hoarse, and trying to do his best, sang so

croakingly as to make the people laugh ; then a speech was made, causing the audience to laugh still more ; then the arrow missed its mark, which drew down hootings and hissing. Notwithstanding these vexations, Duprez brought all into good humour, by the splendid way in which he rendered the finale, drawing down one burst of approval from the audience. A very awkward mistake occurred, also, at my house, as regarded this gentleman, occasioned by, as I think it is Mrs. Trollope calls them, one of the greatest "plagues in life," a maid-servant. Duprez had promised to call and try over some of the words of "La Favorite." And I said to the girl, should a gentleman call this morning, in a carriage, of the name of Duprez, now, mind, and be sure make no mistake, I *will* see him, and no one else.

In a very short space, the carriage did arrive ; a loud knock ensued at the door ; a long pause took place in the passage, the carriage drove off again, and Mons.

Duprez in it. Door of drawing-room opens, enter Plague, flourishing triumphantly a card in her hand. Mountseer Duprez's card.

"Where's Mons. Duprez?"

"Gone!"

"Gone?" astonished.

"Yes; I told him you would see anyone else, but *not him*;" and this, with an air of the highest satisfaction, at the idea of having complied exactly with my request.

The reader may conjecture my frame of mind. In double quick time I started off for Mons. Duprez's hotel in Leicester Square, with an explanation, but the great tenore, though he spoke English, as a *l'étranger*, well, could not exactly comprehend my agitated excuses; and, I fear to the last, thought he had a just right to feel himself irrevocably affronted.

His performance in "*La Favorite*" was even more admired than in "*Guillaume Tell*;" the sweetness of his voice; the truthfulness of his delineation; so perfect in every part. Miss Romer, also, shone wonderfully

in this delightful opera ; her dying scene under *the* cross, was a fine and powerful piece of real tragic acting. No mistake or accident occurred during this opera ; and, although I have since seen it represented, both in French and Italian, by the finest singers, I do not believe it could be in any theatre better sustained, nor with more pathos, than by the inspired allies of that evening, the French tenore, and the English *prima donna*—Mons. Duprez and Miss Romer.

Mrs. Warner.

It must have been under the management of Mr. Bunn, or Mr. Anderson, because I was not with Mr. Macready, that going one night during the performance of the first piece into the green-room, I found Mrs. Warner pensively seated on one of the sofas by the fire. She appeared plunged in thought ; and, with her rich black velvet and plaid robe spread out, and a tiara of jewels on her graceful brow, looked as if Melpomene herself, had deconded to take her

throne there, in that green-room. Just above her head stood the bust of Siddons, as if gazing in mute curiosity, on the beautiful living likeness of herself. Not to disturb thoughts, no doubt, sublime, I walked noiselessly towards the fire, and leaning against the mantelpiece, gazed also in silent admiration for a moment on the fine study of a queen before me—the proud, guilty queen of the irresolute, but equally guilty and ambitious, Macbeth. In a second, Mrs. Warner woke out of her dream of poesy, and I, withdrawing my eyes, sat down in my turn, and said nothing. After the pause of an instant or two, she spoke—

“I suppose, Mr. Fitzball, has forgotten me?”

“Not at all, madam, I was afraid of quite the reverse. Who that ever once had seen a display of your talent on the stage, could forget you? Remember the last time we met, you were the daughter of a poor Innkeeper of Abbeville. Now you are a Queen of Scotland. One may be excused

for being somewhat diffident in your royal presence."

She smiled, but sighed, remarking as to my first allusion. "That's a long time ago ! I'm *greatly* changed since then."

"For the better," replied I, "I thought that impossible once ; now, I perceive, my error."

"At all events, I perceive, you know how to speak compliments," answered she, but, smiling.

"Truths !" I added.

A few words of the past brought us rapidly to a general conversation on the drama. On the gradual decline of the drama, ever since our last meeting, twenty years before ; she complained bitterly of the state the stage had fallen into.

"And yet," I observed, agreeing, nevertheless, with all she asserted, "had your three Weird Sisters foretold us two—to you for instance, that you would become the Melpomene of the time, in the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, in her place, whose

marble image is, as it were, looking down upon you at this moment, as if it would speak to you in approving terms; or predicted to me, that I should one day, also, become the reader both here, and at the other theatre, in which the great Reynolds, Morton, and even Sheridan, had performed the same duty, why, my dear Madam, we should have wished the last twenty years as heartily jumped over, as we now wish them as heartily to jump back again. Recollect Pope's adage—

Man never is, but always to be blessed.

“Nor woman, either,” she would have replied, when the prompter's boy, popping into the room with his squeaking falsetto voice, cried out, “Mrs. Warner!” and Mrs. Warner disappeared to enstain her hands, for the many hundreth time with the golden blood of Duncan.

It was with unqualified success Mr. Bunn produced his famous “Bohemian Girl,” with Balfe's music. And, if we are to judge by its attraction and long run, the

very best criterion, it was the most popular English opera ever yet produced. Miss Romer, Arline ; Mr. William Harrison, the splendid tenor, Thaddeus, her Bohemian lover ; Miss Betts, (the heroine of my Robber's Bride), the Gipsy Queen ; Stretton, Devil's Hoof. It was a capital cast, and with such sweet melodies, so suited, more particularly at that time, to the English taste. Indeed, to all time, for I must think that the Trouvatores and Traviati are a little out of our grasp, however lustily we climb the pole to reach them. For real old English taste there is still a greater charm in a little bit of pure melody, administered by the hand of Bishop, Balfe, Barnet, Laurent, Alexander Lee, or Wallace. The drum of your ear, Johny Bull, is not exactly an *Italian* instrument, however much you submit for pride sake, to have it *bored* with chromatic passages. Mr. Bunn was excessively ill during all the rehearsals of this opera. It was amazing to see with what endurance he submitted to his bodily suffer-

ings, and directed the operations on the stage. Mr. Bunn, both as manager and author, had one great good quality seldom to be met with ; his ear was never closed to an opinion ; nor was he ever offended with the person, however humble, that offered it, whether on reflection he thought best to adopt the advice or not, which he sometimes did, and most complacently. Great was the triumph of the "Siege of Rochelle ;" but far greater of the "Bohemian Girl," which the public needs not be told. Miss Romer surpassed her former self in "I dreamt that I dwelt in Marble Halls ;" and Harrison became immortal by his singing—"When other lips." At this production of this fine English opera, I might, with reason, have felt myself somewhat affected by jealousy, because, till then, I had been considered the libretto writer of the day ; that is to say the English libretto writer ; most sincerely did I throw down the palm to the refulgent genius of Mr. Bunn. But I hear that he, on his part, has since done

me the greatest justice in return. Mrs. Wallack informed me that somewhere in America where Mr. Bunn was delivering a lecture, he spoke of me in the most approving terms, and said that I was considered the best lyric poet of my period, and he was bound to believe it true, as the composers *all* seemed to like composing my words better than those of any other writer.

It was during the run of a spectacle, called the "Desert," the piece, I think, I was witnessing the first night of, when I was so polite as to keep two ladies waiting for me all the while during its representation; I was punished for my want of gallantry, perhaps, exactly as I deserved. I had some M.S.S., which I was requested *immediately* to peruse; and having left them forgetfully on the Saturday night at the theatre, was compelled to go thither for them on the Sunday morning. Now, it so happened that there was a passage passing under the stage to the opposite side of the theatre, where these books were deposited,

through which, for dispatch, I resolved to make my way ; but, no sooner had I inserted myself into this avenue, than I found myself as much arrived in darkness of the densest kind, as if a total eclipse had taken place. I was as completely lost and bewildered as a man in a pyramid, or the labyrinth of Crete. On the week days this passage was lighted by gas, which I had utterly forgotten. This was not the case on a Sunday : no person being in the theatre, but the hall porter at the street door. I looked through the intense darkness for the door at which I entered ; it was neither perceivable, nor discoverable ; and the flooring of the passage itself consisted of a single plank passing over depths of machinery, while on one side, was the grave trap made use of in "Hamlet," into which a single false step would have precipitated me to perish, perhaps. Over my head was the general stage ; over that, another—a false stage, laid down to prevent the shoes of the horses from cutting up the boards of the

lower one; consequently, although I called out as loudly as I could, and beat a ladder against some of the fittings, no one heard me, any more than as if I had been dead and buried, and called for help from a filled up grave. A rope, which I luckily found suspended from above, was all I had to depend on to keep me from slipping off the swinging plank into the equally dark abyss below. The silence was something awful; but what was more awful still to *me*, was, I had told my wife I should return in an hour. She was in very precarious health; and would be in a state of great nervous excitement at my non arrival, as I always did, punctually, as I said, I could not answer for the result. And who was to say what had become of me? The probability, too, was, that I should be compelled to remain alone in the dark till the following Monday night, when the man would come to light the gas.

To some this may appear a ludicrous position; to me it was one of the most intense distress and apprehension; for an

hour, I sat down on an old box, wretched beyond description. I did not dare to go beyond the limit of the rope ; I called to mind an incident, anything but cheering, of poor Auld, a stage manager of my early time, an excellent person, who, being in a theatre, I forget where, passing from the gallery to regain the stage, in the dark, by a plank as he supposed, which *should have been* there, but had been taken up, fell into the deep stone passage below, and was found *dashed to death* hours, if not days after.

I knew not what to do ; I pictured the trouble at home, the despair of my poor invalid wife, my daughter. A night and a day absent, I that had never kept from them a single hour ; they did not know where to find me. I felt as if I should lose my senses ; the darkness, too seemed as if I could feel it. In this moment of my trouble I accused myself of *entering* a theatre on a *Sunday* ; I will not say that I did not admit very serious thoughts to reprove my

heart ; I will not say that I did not feel a moisture in my eyes, it was, perhaps, very unmanly to allow it, but, remember, it was not for myself I suffered. At length I resolved to submit, and was silent, a dreary interval ; a light noise now reached my ears, a soft velvety touch, pit pat ! It was the footstep of one of the cats of the theatre, (there are many kept in those large theatres, on account of the numerous rats, which, else, would infest the machinery,) a sudden thought flashed across my mind, now, almost desperate, that the slight noise of footsteps sounded in retreat, and directed me the way I ought to follow, I obeyed the impulse, scarce knowing what I did, puss was a true pilot, in half a minute I was once more, in the blessed daylight, which never seemed to me so bright before. On passing through the hall, I enquired of the porter, if he had not heard me cry out. His reply was, " Well, I did hear a *something*—but, being *Sunday*, I *fell asleep* !"

My time was now pretty well occupied

in reading the numerous M.S.S. sent in for acceptation, with the strongest recommendations, some by the perfumed notes of aristocratic friends, and others by the authors themselves. The manager was promised golden harvests in their unfailing success, while I invariably found those modestly dumb on their own merits were generally those most deserving of consideration. But I must be allowed to give the reader two specimens, for which I received the most unwarrantable abuse for not recommending ; the first seems to have been written by a foreigner, who evidently had never witnessed the scene he attempts to picture.

Scene VII.—Act I.

St. James's Park, in King William's Chateau in England, the people walkiny about, the ships sailing, and the swans swimming.

King. In this serene retreat, how beautiful it feel, to glide up and down in the water. That way, the city ; this way, the mountains, &c., &c., &c.

Scene VIII.—Act I.

Inside of king's palace, with great sofas standing on which the court ladies are discovered, some playing the harp, while the great lords kiss the hand of the king, who is

seated in a chair of state, around which stand the esquires, jockies, and lackies of the court, handling the punch &c., &c.

Another Specimen—(Operatic).

Act I.—Scene I.

A large oak tree, wound about with honeysuckles, in the branches of which the lark is singing, and squirrels jumping. Celedina, with her shepherdess's crook in her hand, surrounded by a flock of lambkins, bleating, and lookiny in her face. Arcado, (her lover,) playing the bagpipes.*

Opening Air, by Celedina.

Bleat, bleat, bleat, ye pretty lambkins;
Listen to the pibroch sweet—
Skip, skip, skip, ye little lambkins,
Up, and gamble round my feet.

The lambkins all rise, and begin to skip and gamble, in a circle, round the tree, &c., &c.

There are but too many of such absurdities, of which it is impossible to be mistaken in one's judgment. But then there come other works, so *near* the mark, that it is with difficulty you can decide. When this was the case, judgment dwelt not on my opinion. A work may possess the finest poetry, the finest literary qualities, and yet

* In Arcadian days, there is no telling where the lark sang; but in our times, certainly, not in the branches of trees

from want of dramatic construction, be perfectly unsuited to the stage—"Irene," to wit. Construction, in one sense, is as great a gift as poetry; in fact, of the two, for the stage it is better to be deficient in poetry: however the unskilful may laugh, there is a poetry in *action* as well as *words*. As an example to young dramatic aspirants, I point out to them this simple fact, that "Macbeth," "Othello," and "Richard the Third," would act without language; from this very secret, that the immortal Shakspeare was not only a great poet, but a still greater dramatist: that is to say, master of *construction*. Begin by reading them. At least, read them through first for the under current, the plot then minutely examine solely the action. I prophecy it will *much amaze you*.

It is but natural to suppose that experienced authors must be the best judges of the probable success of a play. A manager is too apt to consider what he calls money-drawing points; an actor too frequently

looks at his own individual part, which he extracts with the greatest skill, as minutely as a bee extracts the honey out of a carnation—and, according to his or her individual portion of the sweet, the piece seems good or *bad*. But an author judges by distribution, as a painter does by the arrangement of colour, and in his mind's eye can see the whole effect, whether it will at once produce a harmony. But sometimes, as “ ’tis not in mortal to command success,” even the author is mistaken. While I was reader, with Mr. Anderson, at Drury Lane Theatre, I believe he thought me a little too fastidious on one occasion, and therefore resolved to bring out a tragedy without my being appointed to read it, at which I was heartily glad, because, as I have said in the course of the work, in my engagements with Mr. Bunn, and Mr. Osbaldiston, it was only my business to read the casualties sent in M.S.S. of untried, unknown authors, such as those from whose works I have recently quoted. Well, this tragedy

was read in the green-room. Every one clapped his hands, and of course every one said, (myself excepted,) that it would be a *tremendous hit*. And every one, the manager and myself excepted, had quitted the green-room. He stood with his back to me, looking at himself in the large glass which reaches from the ceiling to the carpet. He still wished to know my sentiments; had I not been waiting in the theatre, for Rodwell, with whom I was going to dine, at Brompton, I should have made my exit with, if not before the other listeners. The tragedy was finely written. Anderson, one of the best readers I ever listened to. At length, after a pause, drawing the ends of his long silk neckerchief into extremes *à la Chevalier*. "Well, Fitz," said he, good-naturedly, but satirically at the same time, "I haven't heard *your* opinion of the play."

"You have heard the opinion of others, sir, equally, nay, even more experienced than myself."

"They are all warmly in favour."

“ All !”

“ And you ?”

“ It is a beautifully written play !”

“ Capital speeches !”

“ Capital ! The first three acts are—
nothing can be better.”

“ And the fourth ?” turning his face somewhat hastily round from the attractive glass, and gazing full at me.

“ The fourth—I think it scarcely fair, under circumstances, when everybody has given you such a promising opinion, especially as in this case I was to stand *neuter*, to ask what I really do think on the subject. I hope you’ll excuse me if I make no reply ; the result will show.”

“ Of course, then, you think it will prove a failure. Now, as a matter of curiosity, I wish particularly to know your exact opinion.”

“ Well, then, since you press me so, I *do* think it will *fail*.”

“ Why,” colouring, “ you do not deny that it is beautifully written ?”

“ Certainly, so it is, and a fine play ; but this play does not depend on language or construction : it is a piece of points, and there is a point in it which cannot be got over with the public.”

“ In the fourth act ?”

“ In the fourth act.”

“ What is it ?”

“ No ; if I am right you'll *hear*—if I am wrong, I cannot be expected to forestall my own want of judgment.”

Anderson laughed at me ; he thought me very conceited, although it was only a business affair, and made his managerial exit. Doubtless the reader will think me very egotistical also, unless he can receive this as a *study*, as it is meant.

The upshot of the story is : the first three acts of the piece went with loud acclamations. You would have thought all secure ; yet when it reached the point in the next act, general disapprobation burst forth at once, and this otherwise fine tragedy so approved by actors, was by the public universally condemned.

The point I speak of was *cowardly assassination* !

True it is, in "Julius Cæsar" we have the same thing ; but that is not a base, dastardly act, it is a tyrant disposed of for the good of his country, *by* the country. In "Nitocris," I plead guilty to a similar experiment, where the boy stabs Mesphra, but that was ridding the earth of a *wretch*, not stabbing a defenceless man when his back was turned to the dagger's point. I write this, also, as an example. It shows the necessity of well studying how to bring to pass an untoward event. In this tragedy, I mean the tragedy which failed, it was not the assassination, but the dastardly manner in which it was perpetrated. As Mr. Yates said—"It is not only the blue fire, but where to light it." A man does not require to be a Greek scholar, or to have Horace at his finger's ends, to become a good dramatist, or to be a great judge of a drama, as regards in particular its actability. A person may even act on the stage fifty

years and know as little about this as a drunkard, drunk every day, knows the real taste of wine. The real taste of wine is a gift of nature, as much as the real knowledge of a good painting is a mental one. There is no accounting for such things. I have known the commonest men excellent judges of the probable success of a play. A tailor of the name of Godbee at the Adelphi Theatre was fatal in his predictions. At the Surrey Theatre, years ago, a manager, who used to call a piece of mine—" *That 'ere Waverley**," was one of the best judges I ever met with. If he said a piece would *not* do,

" It was sure to die."

And, in those days, it was very difficult for men to judge by rehearsals; because, for instance, the stage-manager was something like an escaped lunatic, from whose frantic actions, every one stood cautiously aloof, as if afraid he should bite. I have seen a stage-manager in his extreme energy, wear two beavers up, that is to say, knock out the

• Waverley.

crowns of two new hats, (in those days, hats were much dearer than now) and then beat his head against the side scene. All this intended to give a strong idea of the high importance of the piece, which importance you were bound modestly to suppose was encreased by the every-day increasing fury of the getter-up. Then I have seen at another theatre—a theatre royal—the stage-manager assume melancholy madness, and walk about like a condemned felon muttering his last prayers the morning of his execution, with a deep groan at every step, and his eyes turning green, like a cat's in the dark, as if he were the greatest, but most injured person in the world—a second Ixion bound through the jealousy of Jupiter, to the wheel of stupidity. The best managers that I ever did rehearse with, were the *Farrens* ; with them, all was bland, good nature ; no disgusting assumption or affectation, but friendly and gentlemanly. If an author offered an opinion, rudeness was quite out of the question. Mr. Creswick, also, with

whom I but recently rehearsed, is a most gentlemanly stage-manager, and endowed with the greatest pretensions to the art ; and no mean merit it is to make that which is art, resemble *nature*. A man to be a good stage-manager, should be like a general in an army, who, if he is a good general, does not commence his manœuvres by kicking a hole in the drum to show the soldiers how he can kick ; such a general is very likely to want the drum to sound a sudden retreat. A stage-manager should resemble the father of a family ; it is not necessary for him to run about the stage like the muleteer in the “ Rose of Castille ” cracking a long whip to the terror of every one’s legs and eyes. But these things are now, I rejoice to say, *much* improved. And here, again, for courtesy, mingled with common sense, we owe much gratitude to our French allies. To unsophisticated minds, what I have here written, may seem strange ; but there are many, like myself, who have been doomed to

witness such circumstances, and laughed like me aside, with pity and contempt.

From this commentary on stage-managers, I shall relate a story of the unsophisticatedness of certain people on the subject of stage representations. This morning, I met a gentleman who, a member of the Princess's Theatre, told a story about an old woman who sells oranges in the Hampstead Road. He frequently dealt with her as he went to and fro, living at Camden Town, and learning that he was a member of the theatrical profession, when his benefit came on, the grateful old creature put up in a raffle, for tickets, and, having won a passport to the gallery, arrived in time to secure a front place; perhaps, both for seeing and hearing, the best place in the house. The play was "Henry the Eighth." Queen Katherine, Mrs. Charles Kean. Now, we must change the scene back again to Hampstead Road, and the patroness of the benefit safely *installed* at her *stall* again. A lapse of some

days having occurred, Mr. C. *en passant*, walks up to his patroness of the oranges to purchase a few of the golden fruit. The patroness had evidently something struggling in her mind to say; and, rubbing up one of the oranges, not only to render the object of sale as glossy as possible, but to delay time before she could muster courage to express her deep feelings. At length she exclaimed with heartfelt curiosity and anxiety, speaking in Irish of Queen Katherine, "pray sir, *could* you be plased to inform me if that *owld* lady is dead yet?"

Mr. and Mrs. Keeley being at this period managers at the Lyceum, I had the pleasure to write for them one of my prettiest, at least, one of my most successful dramas :

The Momentous Question.

I had frequently admired that charming print, so domestically beautiful, but could not learn from whence the subject had been selected; at length I discovered, and procuring the poem, immediately set to work about the drama. My first idea was to

produce it at the Haymarket; I spoke to Buckstone, (not then manager of that theatre). He liked the idea of the drama, and promised to mention it to Mr. Webster, then manager; in the interim, however, I met Mr. Keeley in King Street, Covent Garden, to whom I named the existence of this aforesaid "Momentous Question." He seemed still more struck with the story, requesting me to return home, and bring back my piece, along with me, to the theatre, which I did in a few hours; it was not only attentively read, but accepted for immediate production. On my way home I met Buckstone, on the very spot where I had met Keeley; he had kept his word honestly; Webster wished to peruse the M.S., but it was already too late; I hoped that Mrs. Keeley would take a fancy to the part of Rachael, but she did not, and

Miss Fortesque,

a capital actress, very handsome, the image of the Rachael in the picture, was deputed to the part, which she played

admirably ; then I had my friend of the past, Frederick Vining, and Mr. Diddear, uncle to Helen Faucit, who made quite a legitimate piece of acting of the gamekeeper. Collier was Union Jack, and Mrs. A Wigan, Fanny. I always liked this domestic drama, there is a sweet interest in the story, so natural, so unaffected ; I have no doubt Crabb founded it on actual *truth*. It has been acted everywhere, and is everywhere a favourite. It is somewhat remarkable that a person exceedingly prejudiced against me, as a writer, took quite a different turn towards me, from accidentally witnessing this simple piece, at the Surrey Theatre ; and there are few good actresses on the stage, I am proud to say, who have not at one time or other, played Rachael, in the “ *Momentous Question*.*”

The great success I met with, as a libretto writer, brought many applicants for books ;

* The original painting on this subject, by Miss Setchel, was purchased by Her Majesty, as a present for His Royal Highness, Prince Albert, who was much struck with its domestic beauty, at the exhibition.

I wrote one for Mr. Westrop, Mr. Coote, Mr. McCarroll of Brighton, another for Montgomery, some of which may probably, I hope, for the composers, see the light before or shortly after these pages; amongst the rest, who applied to me, through my friend, H. St. Ledger Esq., (an Irish gentleman of *great taste*, especially in matters of music,) since fully known to the public, was

Vincent Wallace.

At our first interview, I did not acquiesce, although out of no sort of disrespect, either to him or his talent, because he was like his talent, an entire stranger to me. He was, however, a magnificent pianist, and happening to hear him play, I was so struck with his performance, that I speedily resolved to write some words to a splendid piece, of his composition, which has since become so excessively popular, under the somewhat romantic title of

The Harp in the Air.

This was our commencement, from which,

piece by piece, we concluded his universally admired opera of

Maritana.

I was the first to mention the great merits of this opera to Mr. Bunn, but he invariably turned a deaf ear to my commendations, not on account of the music, of which he knew nothing, but because he imagined that "Don Cæzar de Bazan" was a hack-nied and worn-out subject. At length it so happened that Mr. Wallace gave one of his splendid performances on the piano, (he could play the violin equally well,) at the Hanover Square Rooms, (probably some compositions of his own,) when Sir Henry Webb heard, and spoke of him with great admiration, to our manager. Mr. Bunn immediately enquired of me, if this was the same Wallace I had so frequently mentioned with so much enthusiasm, and finding it was, now requested to read the libretto which hitherto he had refused to look at. I took it to him on a Saturday—he lived very near to me at the time, in

Fitzroy Square, but had a beautiful country retreat at West Drayton, to which place he carried the M.S., read it in the interim, and sent for me on the Monday morning, having returned to town.

He was pleased to be somewhat facetious on the subject, and enquired whether I had written the book of "Maritana," "If not," I answered, "I am unacquainted with the author." I was somewhat apprehensive of what would come next; but he continued, in his usually off-hand, but kind manner, "well, if the *fellow* who has composed the music, is as clever as the *fellow* who wrote the book, then all I have to say is, you are two clever *fellows* together; the words are capital, and do you the greatest credit."

The blood rushed to my head, egotistical as I may appear to the reader, in the writing of these pages, being so frequently *compelled* to resort to the first personal pronoun, I am *really*, and not ashamed to own it, a very diffident and retiring person, as regards my own merits. If the manager had found

some sort of fault, I should have had more courage, but he had only praise to offer, and my stammering reply was, "For myself, sir, I thank you, but this Mr. Wallace is a *much, much* cleverer *f' o* than your humble servant." (I would not vouch that the reply to this was not that he required no more of my affectation,) and the best way will be, this very evening to bring Mr. Wallace, that you may hear some of the music, which I, like Sir Henry Webb, think so charmingly astonishing. In the evening Wallace went with me to Fitzroy Square, played over his opera; everybody, as I expected, was delighted, and the work accepted for immediate representation. But it should be told to the inexperienced, that a new grand opera does not come out quite so rapidly as I have related these details. Rehearsal after rehearsal has to take place, and many are the heartburnings for more than one of the party concerned, before the public ear listens to the harmony produced in the conclusion. In due time, however, the grand

original opera of "Maritana," was produced with unequivocal success, and ran a nearly uninterrupted course of a whole season. Mr. Bunn himself, wrote the words of two beautiful songs, "In happy moments," and "Scenes that are brightest," (since so popular.) My pieces were, "It was a Knight," "Turn on, old Time, thine hour-glass,"—"Hark! those chimes!" and "There is a flower that bloometh!" This opera stood little indebted, either to scenic aid, or that of costume; the more especially to the former, as we had but one new scene, a drop, which was inevitable; therefore, its own musical merits, assisted by the exertions of the singers, Mr. W. Harrison, H. Phillips, Miss Romer, and Miss Poole, won for it a celebrity which I have not the slightest doubt, will carry down its great reputation to a long posterity.

Some time after this, by one of those extraordinary metamorphoses which attend managers and managements, I find Mr. Bunn has abdicated his throne at Drury

Lane, and mounted the rostrum at the Surrey. This was a great mistake; although Elliston had certainly tried the same manœuvre with effect: but Elliston met with an *immensity* of good luck in becoming acquainted with Douglas Jerrold's "Black Eyed Susan."

Mr. Bunn, the best manager in my time at Drury Lane, was as much out of his element at the Surrey as a mouse would be in an aquarium. I never felt that it was beneath Elliston; somehow he could make himself Mr. Elliston anywhere, and he was *very grand*, too: but Mr. Bunn was not Mr. Bunn at the Surrey, and it was infinitely beneath *him*.

This sort of logic seems very contradictory. All I can say is, it *was* so. Elliston used to remind me of Cincinnatus at his plough: Bunn of some high-minded Baron banished to Siberia; in short, he was quite out of his position, and I'm sure he felt so. How Elliston endured it is marvellous: how Bunn did *not* endure it, is not at all marvel-

lous. If "Black Eyed Susan" had left a black eyed sister behind her, with equal attractions, it might have been more consolatory. But the company was operatic. I quite forget what were the pieces produced, except the "Bohemian Girl." It was there, and under that management, I brought out the

Daughter of the Regiment,

from which little was anticipated, although a happy result occurred. Miss Poole delighted the Surreyites, and the opera ran a long succession of nights; then, by way of a drawer-up, I gave them a touch of *blue fire* in

The Traveller's Room,

with droll little Oxberry, who pleased mightily; but there is an old adage, which says that you cannot serve God and Mammon, so, somehow, the operatics and the melodramatics don't couple well together, and though "The Traveller's Room" was very well furnished, the travellers somehow did not bring their carpet bags. Nevertheless,

after Mr. Bunn relinquished the sceptre, and Miss Romer came to be manageress of the Surrey, with opera, I wrote there a melodrame suggested to me by Wm. West, called

Alice May,

which ran more than sixty nights. But I should say the *first-rate* acting of Mr. Mead had an immense deal to do with its success. Mr. Widdicombe—the mirth-convulsing Widdicombe—as a Policeman, (a conceited Policeman is a sure card); Miss Coveney, as Alice May; and her sprightly sister in a comic part. This piece was afterwards produced at the Marylebone, by Mr. E. L. Smith, (now Manager of Drury Lane,) for whom I had written a melodrame—"Hans Von Stein; or, the Robber Knight." This was my first introduction to *that* gentleman, of whom I shall have hereafter much to say. "Alice May" was also brought out by Mr. Conquest at the Eagle, and ran upwards of sixty nights more. It has been played everywhere, and translated

into *French*. It really seems quite ridiculous, like Lopez de Vega, who could write a piece before breakfast, the numbers of plays, farces, melodramas, operas, &c., &c., that I have inflicted on the good nature of the public ; I have not done yet. It was somewhere about this period that I lost, I *deplore* to say, the entire friendship and good opinion of my hitherto kind old manager, Mr. Bunn ; and that, like a dream which dissolves in an instant ; by a circumstance equally singular.

It was on the occasion of that remarkable trial about Mademoiselle Jenny Lind, for breach of contract to sing for Mr. Bunn at Drury Lane. One morning, so early as, I think, between seven and eight o'clock, Mr. Bunn came for me in his carriage, (I suppose I was served with the subpoena at the same time, I can't recollect,) and hurried me to the court as a witness in this case. On what subject I was going to be questioned, or what reply I was to make, was as much a mystery to me as the name

of the builder of the first pyramid. However, there stood I, as nervous as a sensitive plant, in the witness box. The question put to me was—"At what time of the year did the manager hand over to you a M.S., 'The Camp of Silesia,' to translate for Mademoiselle Jenny Lind to appear in?"

Now I appeal to any Reader, of any theatre, so abruptly brought into a court, and who has, perhaps, been given six or seven M.S.S. in a day, whether, without some previous notice, or, some reference to memoranda, he could, possibly, have charged his recollection so far as to answer this question at once? I could not; and therefore simply replied—"I believed it was at West Drayton, in the *summer*."

"Why the *summer*?"

"I recollected the flowers were in bloom."

This caused a smile from more than one. It was in the *winter* the circumstance occurred.

"Who gave you the M.S.?"

"Mr. Bunn."

QUESTIONER, (*facetiously questioning my poetical tendency.*)—"Now, Mr. Fitzball, don't you think it was the Flying Dutchman?"

REPLY, (*simply.*)—"I don't think that Mr. Bunn looks much like the *Flying Dutchman.*"

(*Roars of laughter in the court, the Questioner and the Judge laughing as immoderately as the rest.*)

Yet would it be believed that I had not the remotest idea of saying anything comical. In my mind's eye I beheld my transparent Vanderdecken looking over the bow of his *phantom* ship, and could not think it possible to mistake *any* mortal, opaque form for his. As a proof that my conception of the ethereal composition of Vanderdecken was not altogether an outrage, Madame Celeste, who has recently enacted the part many nights at the Adelphi, dresses it in a light gauzy drapery over her costume to give it the effect of a *spiritual* resemblance. Not but what the mind is capable

of conceiving the etheriality of a spirit without any ocular demonstration.

The Attorney-General, I believe it was, dismissed me with a very polite bow, and gladly did I escape.

Mr. Bunn gained a verdict of *several thousand pounds*, and wrote me that evening a *very* angry letter, accusing me of ridiculing him, of which I felt very unconscious, and expressing towards me a contempt and indignation of which I still feel utterly undeserving. But I hope long ere this—I have not seen him for years—that my generous old friend has discovered the impossibility of my ever wishing to detract from his dignity, or to act contrary to his interest. Let him reasonably ask himself what could have been my motive—what my recompense. To despise myself, if I could in heart or desire have felt anything but grateful esteem and kindest remembrances to the writer of the following letter, which just shows the trust and confidence he then placed in me —

“ MY DEAR FITZBALL,—

“ I cannot get away from Palace duty
“ without incurring Royal displeasure : it
“ being the birthday !* Like a good fellow,
“ take my place and issue your *own* directions
“ as to any and all stage business. I will
“ try to get to Drury Lane by half-past two
“ or three. Get any private box, and write
“ whatever orders you like.

“ Yours very truly,

“ A. BUNN.

“ Thursday morning.”

His angry letter filled me with the deepest distress at the time ; but, alas ! alas ! the *real* tale of woe which it is my sad lot now to record has *almost* changed my nature, and taught me to look upon every former ill in this transitory world with a very philosophic eye.

I speak of the blight which fell upon my

* Mr. Bunn was at this time one of the Gentlemen-at-Arms. As a manager, Mr. Bunn's place has not yet been supplied. He was the greatest friend to operatic people that ever yet came on the English stage : liberal, a poet, and a gentleman.

remaining existence—the loss of my faithful, affectionate partner through thirty years of excitement and anxiety—the death of my *dear wife*.

Let us return to the little rose garden in the old Close in Norwich; let us glance up again at the window where that young girl is working in gold beads her satin slipper by the stilly light of the evening; let us look down into the carnation beds below, at the young heart beating there, and the fond, watchful eyes of early, untold love: and then fly away through the lapse of years to this sad page of our eventful narrative, and reflect—to this complection we all must come at last. *What is the world?* A dream!

There was a drama produced at Drury Lane called the “*Passing Shadow*,” (Bernard.) It was under Mr. Anderson’s management. I was reader still, and it was my duty to witness the first night’s performance of every novelty, and report my opinion to the manager next morning. My

wife had not been so well as usual during the last two days ; but her illness having continued on and off now for *twelve years*, I had got rather accustomed to it, as you may suppose, and like one long used to a gathering storm, did not see the nearer approach of the clouds. Still, that night in particular, I did not, as usual, go round to speak to the manager, but impelled by some involuntary emotion, hurried home to George Street, at the end of Gower Street, where I then resided. The rain fell as I proceeded, not in a shower, but in solitary drops, as if the angels wept. God knows, for He alone knows all hearts, how much I was entitled to sympathy and pity in that melancholy hour.

On entering the drawing-room I was delighted to find my wife apparently *much better*. She had waited tea for me, and had dressed herself in a purple gown which I had given her as a present—purple being her favourite colour. She was alone, my daughter having recently been married, and

was living at some little distance with her husband. There were two what are called composite candles on the table, and while the tea was proceeding, and I was telling the interesting story of the "Passing Shadow," a cloud came over her brow, her eyes being fixed mournfully on the candles, from each of which projected what are called by the superstitious *winding-sheets*. I rose and made an attempt to brush them off, as if by accident.

"Oh," she said, sadly, "it is very kind of you to do that, but they are winding sheets for *me*."

I affected to turn the matter into ridicule, by observing, "I don't exactly know what you require two winding-sheets for; it seems there is one of them for me, and I beg you'll not be covetous; we shall *all* require such a tranquil garment when the time arrive."

"My time *has* arrived;" was the mournful reply, "Your's will not be yet—I have been a sad clog on your happiness and in-

terest, now, for years. When I am gone, you must not regret me too deeply, it is my *sincere* injunction. For myself, I only regret the separation ; you have proved to me a patient, good, affectionate husband, and despite of all the trouble and anxiety we have gone through together, gladly would I undergo it all again, for your sake." These were her exact words. I was speechless, seeing her there, looking so pale and earnestly at me, and her voice thrilling through every fibre of my heart : tenderly solemn—affectionately dreadful ! She was seated in a low chair which I had had made purposely for her, and placing her hands upon the arms to raise herself, seeing how agonized I appeared, she put on a forced smile, and said, in a soothing tone of voice, " Never mind what I have said ; this, perhaps, may be only a *passing shadow*. I have sat up too late." I lighted the lamp, and hastily took up the plate basket, which I always made a habit of carrying every night into our bed-chamber. I stood waiting for her

to accompany me; she had *no longer the strength to rise*, every bodily faculty seemed exhausted, in this *last* effort to sit up for *me*, for the last time. I raised her in my arms, with the assistance of the servant, who came quickly. I lifted her into bed; from that bed, alas! she rose no more. Some few days passed, I never left her, scarcely an instant. The doctors, Doctors Pretty and Martyn, *said* she was dying; I could not believe it; other doctors had told me so twelve years ago — her last words were to console me — her eyes, when it was too much effort to speak, followed my footsteps whichever way I turned. At length, she no longer saw me, nor heard me, nor pressed my hand; She was mercifully spared, by the *gracious* Omnipotent, her so dreaded pang of separation. Every faculty dropped, leaf by leaf, away; she was *no more*; she was in my arms, *dead*. Strange, incongruous as it may appear, the frightful conviction was not intense agony, as one might naturally have supposed; no!

It was a sort of relieved feeling—a relaxation of the tightened chords of suffering, or the overstrained heart must have burst at once. Such are the wonderful provisions of nature. I was relieved, that *she* had ceased to suffer. This lull over, and it was but too brief, my brain gave way; I was as insensible as she was, that I had lost now, in this world, for ever.

I too speedily returned to consciousness. They had put up a bed for me in the drawing-room; how I came in it, I knew not—I felt that I had been ill, and my first enquiry was for my faithful nurse, who always forgot all her own ailments in attending to mine—my *wife*; the look of distress, the tearful silence which ensued, told me over again the melancholy truth. Then I did *indeed suffer*, and I do here assert, that the dreary desolation of that little instant, indescribable by mortal pen, might amply have atoned for the past, had my life been ever so culpable. I was offended with my most excellent friend, Mr.

Gye, senr., (who was amongst the first to hurry to my consolation,) when he told me that time would restore me to myself; he had gone through all that I had suffered, indeed worse, and resignation had returned. I did not believe that resignation *could* return in this world to *me*, yet here I am, able to relate this sad story of misery, eight years after : consoled—resigned. But there is a sweet and beautiful hope undying in my heart, the hope of the promise of God, that we *shall* meet again shortly, in an enduring happiness, “Where the wicked cease from troubling—where the weary are at rest.”

Let us now turn aside from this everyday, melancholy tale of mortality. I have now entered on a new part; I am a widower; and a very *singular* feeling that is, after having, from boyhood almost, had one heart in which to lock my troubles, or my joys—a *widower*. It has seemed to me, however, that although I have not been with her, in her invisible presence, as if some-

how she were always with me : my better genius—my watchful angel. Who knows ? The *cherub aloft*—and although, since I lost her, I have not been so fortunate as hitherto, my spirits have not been crushed. I can be cheerful, even happy, especially in solitude, which, above all things, I enjoy.

Now to return to life. The first dramatic attempt I made, after these painful events, was of all things, that which seems most at variance with them, the opening of a *comic* Christmas pantomime,

Alonzo and Imogene,

for Mr. Charles Kean and Mr. Keeley. A deep debt of gratitude I owe those gentlemen, for their kindness in fixing upon my inventive powers, the mind diverting task of constructing *that* pantomime ; it was the first thing which succeeded in restoring the tone of my overwhelmed mind, to itself, and to divert away the ruinous indifference with which I had began to regard the necessary and social pursuits of life.

If there be anything on earth more cal-

culated to draw back the mind from a settled melancholy, it is the rehearsal of a comic Christmas pantomime. Where everything is composed of absurdity, and nothing *real*, except the outlay, and as that only falls on the back of the manager, who expects, and generally is repaid twenty times the cost, nobody cares. Paint is daubing, gilt is dabbing, fiddles scraping, harlequin, (not in his patches and spangles,) capering, he keeps doing something very mysterious with his hands, moving them up and down, and backwards and forwards, in a manner perfectly unintelligible to anyone but himself, and the stage manager; and by certain masonic looks, which they occasionally exchange between each other, you perceive that all's right, and the effect at night, will be astounding, to the orange suckers of Olympus, and the dear little boys, home for the holidays. Those precocious cherubs do not wish it were holiday time every day in the year, more than do Mr. Harlequin, and Mr. Flatcatch, the

manager. A *fatherly* man is Mr. Flatcatch, and fond he is of seeing the *rising* generation in his *lower* boxes, and their amiable p—as and ma—s—with their gran——pas and gran——mas also, enjoying the shrill little laughs of the sweet darlings, as Mathews used to say, who have got the money. Then we have columbine, in her *dishabille*, a somewhat soiled french hen sort of a muslin dress, and a still more soiled pair of once white satin slippers, in which she runs about on the tips of her toes, and spins round and round like a tetotum—then there is Tom Mathews, the clown, who always becomes a sort of inspired wit, a week before Christmas, as if he smelt plum pudding and hot codlins. And old Barnes, the noted pantaloon, without effort, practising a broken back; and last of all, not least in this vast catalogue, *them* fairies, some tatting, and more chatting, till, ever and anon, the anxious manager, with purple eyes, is making a great noise himself, calling out “silence *you fairies* in the pit.”

Then, amid the crash of scenery, stubborn scenery that gets always proud at Christmas, and will not be rudely pushed about, and a dialogue carried on at the back, in parliamentary force, by another great man, most important in this affair, Mr. Sloman, master carpenter, and all the other carpenters, respecting dove-tailing, not meaning the silver doves who support Cupid in the forthcoming pantomime. Then begins the *hopening* poetry, as to the hearing of which, there seems no *hope*, to the despair of the forlorn and very much *in-the-way* looking author. He wishes that he had the mystic bough of Robert the Devil, to *hish* all that made there, a noise, to sleep, and throws himself into an attituding, *à la* Byron, agony of delight, as Miss Louisa Abrahams, so far as *his* concerned, not of a euphoneous school, speaks, disdainful of emphasis, the opening words of Titania, which the author's practised ear distinctly catches, however much other ears be deaf.

Titania.

Oh ! my lov'd lord ! before the rise of sun,
Shake *hoff* the dew, and let us 'ave some fun—
The pinks, and *wiolets* are vide awake,
The *osses* in the pond their thirst do slake—
Little Red Riding Hood, with pot of butter,
Nought thinking of the wolf that's going to *eater*—
Is in the wood ; see, where she crosses *hover*—
Hup, fairies, hup ; and you in clouds that *hove-er*,
Descend on wings of *light*.

At this part of the invocation, a loud railway whistle rends the gaseous air, and a tremendous waving of a white flag, by the stern looking prompter, whose privilege it is never to smile, except when imposing a fine ; at this signal some six or ten little victims, (*the fairies*,) fastened like the Chinese criminals, to a torture pole, descend in a somewhat straight attitude, their cramped legs hanging very stiff, to bamboozle the wolf, Mr. Muzzleby, who runs about wolfishly on all fours, below ; the fairies, as yet, are without their *wings* of *light*, as they, the said wings, are in the property room, undergoing *sizing*, till which operation is gradually performed, the

etherial light will not stick on. There are many sticks during the rehearsal, as may naturally be apprehended; there are sticks in the tricks, sticks in the scenery, sticks in the orchestra, notwithstanding that great stick of all, the baton, and *many* sticks on the stage. At length the roguish wolf, despite of his artful dodge, I beg pardon, disguise, a red cloak, and large black bonnet, the of period of the Georges,—Thackery could tell us about it,—which appropriate costume decidedly fixes the date of fairy times, is turned into a fat clown, who, to remind you that he has still his wolfish propensities, steals everything he can lay his paws on, and swallows ravenously, paper pies, opera hats, cod fish, and, in short, everything he can cram down his voracious throat; while the poor, respectable old superannuated pantaloon, is kicked and cuffed, and lifted up by the small of his back, to the risible convulsions of lookers on, till you would think he had no backbone left. Harlequin and Columbine, *pas de*

deux, capering in, and out of farm-yards, without soiling their white tips, Thames Tunnels, and all sorts of impossible places, till at last they arrive in due time, at the Temple of *Invisible Love*, where a maypole shoots up a rose, in the likeness of a large red cabbage; then this cabbage-rose, expanding, shoots forth a hundred and more, strings of little cabbage-roses; and a bevy of fat girls, smiling with all their might, are pushed up, and hung up, on lilies, which are now fated to bear heavy loads, and very frequently to reel, and spin also, quite contradicting the old moral, about "they toil not, neither do they spin." At this climax, up rushes a sort of volcano, with volcanic eruptions in his face, the firework maker, to take the blaze of the "gorgeous pantomime," all to himself, by setting fire to something in a sort of iron shovel, the much reviled blue fire, the light of other days, which they of the present, don't seem to be able to do without, though now, revelling in the more modern and transcen-

dent appellation of *Le feu d'artifice, illirium budei origensis*, which glorification nobody understands, not even the concocter ; and this ends a night rehearsal of a grand comic pantomime, which no less astonishes ourselves, than our foreign allies as one of the original concoctions of the *barbarous isle*. Of "Alonzo and Imogene," little has to be said, except that Mr. Wynne personated, admirably, that famous heroine of Lewis, who would have been astonished had he seen the fair creation of his prolific brain, "seated on the green," then, swinging on a rope, between two trees, and pushed to and fro, by the lusty hand of her strenuous Alonzo, and blushing with maiden modesty, to the tips of her ponderous eardrops, as sometimes the rude current of wind betrayed too much of the golden clocks of her silken hose. This Mr. Wynne was also a gentleman of great literary talent ; author of many well-known popular works ; son of Madame Sala, the celebrated singer ; but died, poor fellow, very suddenly,

and very young, of that frightful calamity disease of the heart.

Of the "Last of the Fairies," founded on Mr. James's beautiful romance, and the "Miller of Derwent," I should here say nothing, except for two circumstances. In the latter I was first introduced to

Mr. Robson,

who played the doctor ; I need not say as well as it could possibly be acted. Not knowing him, and never having seen him act, I took the liberty of suggesting several things which I wished to have done in performing this character, which he listened to with the modesty of an amateur, and religiously adopted. So it is with all men of *real* talent. A single scene at night was sufficient to stamp on my mind the genius of Robson. The great actor he has proved himself every playgoer knows. The second incident was this : the house being very full on the *first* night of the "Last of the Fairies," I could only have a seat in a pri-

vate box with two ladies—daughters of a bishop, as I was told. For the truth of that I will not vouch. However, it was not difficult to see, at a glance, they were gentlewomen, and as the play went on, they watched its progress with the greatest interest. At length the curtain fell amid loud applause, and, to my consternation, the *author was called for*. One of the ladies then enquired, with nervous curiosity, of me, if I could possibly tell her in what box the author would be likely to make his appearance. My reply was, rising to go—“That, from what I *felt*, he was not likely to make his appearance at all.” At that moment Mr. Edward Murray, the treasurer, opened the door of the box, and said that Mr. Farren begged me to recognise the call, or it would be insulting the audience, who evidently knew I was present. I was then compelled to request the permission of the two ladies to allow me just to step between them, and make my bow ; and I do not know which caused the greatest sensation in

my mind, the approbation of the public, or the astonished looks of the bishop's daughters.

It would be very unjust, as well as ungrateful, not to say a word or two here of Mr. Henry Farren, who played the Miller of Derwent most excellently, and to whom I am entirely indebted for the production of that play. Henry Farren, although sometimes a little too boisterous—a fault on the right side for so young a man—has in him all the germs and genius of a splendid actor, and *will* be one, if he only has the courage to imitate the example set by Mr. Charles Kean. He is now in America. I hope to see the day, and that soon, when he will return, mellowed by ripe experience, and tread in the flowery path which his father, also like Kean's, has trod so magnificently before him.

The publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," the deservedly popular production of Mrs. Stowe, set all the managers mad to produce it on the stage. Every theatre nearly pro-

duced its version. I don't know whose was the best. I was engaged by three managers to write three distinct pieces, which I did to the best of my abilities: indeed, it did not require any remarkable ability, as it was only to select scenes and join them together. My pieces were produced: one at the Olympic, for Mr. Farren; one at the Eagle, for Mr. Conquest; and one at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, for Mr. E. T. Smith. The crowd to witness the representation of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" at the latter house was so immense, that many accidents occurred from the pressure outside. In the theatre not a word was heard, from those who could not obtain seats stamping the rogues march, and kicking up the most appalling noises in the galleries.


Mr. James,

of the Queen's Theatre, (a very model for managers in courtesy and kindness,) after the run of the Drury Lane "Uncle Tom's Cabin," although he had already played a piece on the same subject, did me the honor

to revive mine at his theatre with the greatest care and attention; and being a first-rate artist, assisted by his equally talented son, painted some beautiful scenery himself, especially the Sea of Ice, which contributed immensely to the run of this piece on that once site of kingly residences, King John's Palace, for instance,—Tottenham Court Road, and other singularities of a theatrical kind in the environs, as for example, read a very old advertisement—

TOTTENHAM COURT FAIR.

In A. Lee and Woodward's *tiled* booth, near the Turnpike, during the fair will be presented "The Generous Freemason; or, the Constant Lady," including the "Humours of Squire Noodle:" to which will be added "Harlequin Sorcerer," &c., &c.

 Begin at ten in the morning and end at nine at night.

George Wild.

In the "Uncle Tom's Cabin" at Drury

Lane, I introduced the part of a Pedlar, which harmonised exceedingly well with the peculiar character of the play, for George Wild, and which he executed with a skill the world never gave him credit for. A capital actor was George Wild, in the style of *the* Mathews—I mean the *elder* Mathews. But there are people whose merits are entirely overlooked, be they what they may. There is not at this moment a better comic actor on the stage than George Wild was ; he did not, like *many* others, blow his own trumpet ; and I begin to think now, although I myself have never adopted the system, that part of the education of a boy who has his way to make in the wide world, should be to blow his own trumpet, like the mountebank outside the show. I see it practised with so much success every day, both in public and private, that the old-fashioned nonsensical line —

On their own merits modest men are dumb,
is about as applicable to the *fast* genius of the present day, as a lumbering stage coach

would be to admonish the speed of a railway train. George Wild was the son of a pastrycook, and a most respectable one, in Tottenham Court Road. He went to see Mathews, and was stage-struck, unfortunately for himself and family. Of his early career I know little. My first interview with him was when he personally applied to me as manager of the Queen's Theatre in Tottenham Court Road, to write him a melodrame. I was too occupied to write a new one, and he brought out my "Deserted Mill." Again, I found him at the Marylebone Theatre, next at Drury Lane, with Mr. Smith, who was very much attached to him. Everywhere he succeeded, but nobody made a fuss about him, because he made no fuss about himself. As a manager, he sustained great losses, which losses, I fear, produced the most unfortunate result to the well-doing of his family. The last time I saw him was near the great entrance of Drury Lane Theatre. The theatre was about to close with the conclusion

of the season. I inquired of him how he was likely to be engaged during the recess. His reply was a remarkable one : " There are still six nights to play, which will fill up *my* time." This being uttered in his off-hand, reckless manner, I thought little about it, till Mr. Smith himself came into the vestibule of the theatre, where I happened to be a very short time after, talking with Mr. Chatterton, the box-bookkeeper, and told us that poor George Wild was *dead*. Of course he was ill at the period he spoke to me ; but, like Mercutio, his animal spirits were so great, he would not resign himself to believe that he was seriously ill, or to let others think so. Such things are. Shakspeare seems to have known everything. Can we marvel, in reading this sad result, if staid fathers have a natural horror at the idea of their children taking to the stage. The domestic home, the domestic hearth, the respectability of years, all was wrecked in the outshoot of George Wild from the avocation of his forefathers. Yet all this

is not to be attributed to the defalcations of the stage. A man of ever such abilities, let him be *whatever* profession he may, if weak enough to be addicted to low company, is sure to sink at last, and, in falling, crush those who love *him* best, and whom *he* loves best. This happens every day, in the church as well as on the stage. I knew a fatal instance of it in my own family. This fatal propensity is a *curse*, which, like the Indian weed, creeps over a whole house, and eventually pulls down the house along with it.

Mr. Betty, Junr.,

son of the once celebrated Young Roscius, played the part of George in "Tom's Cabin," with much care and attention; but his powers are far beyond such trifling characters. In Hamlet or Virginius he would have had greater scope for his abilities and his powerful voice. Who, of the early part of the century, does not recollect his father, Master Betty, whose acting put all England into one excitement. The theatre was opened in the day time, so universal was

the curiosity to witness the performance of that wonderful boy. I saw him not long ago in Leicester Square, advanced in years, his hair like untrodden snow, but still handsome and dignified as ever ; and so

The sands of life run on.

Mr. Anderson.

But I have, somehow, omitted a circumstance which occurred during my engagement with Mr. Anderson, when he was lessee of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. Never did I see any manager seat himself on the theatrical throne with better pretensions than Mr. Anderson : he was an excellent actor of the Macready school, a very fine man, in the prime of his youth, with a thorough knowledge of the stage and its appurtenances. I really cannot, even at this distance of time, after so much space for reflection, imagine why that gentleman so strenuously wished to engage me ; yet that he was most anxious for my enlistment under his banner, is clear, by a letter wherein he facetiously tells me my toast, if

I accept the engagement, shall be "*battered on both sides*." Under such substantial expressions who could have resisted? I was *again* reader at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, for which I relinquished a similar offer at the rival theatre, Covent Garden. Well, all went on swimmingly for a time; I had only to read brainracking M.S.S., as hitherto, and sit like an owl in a cobwebby corner of the theatre, cogitating over incomprehensibilities. Hamlet, and his Father's Ghost, walked their nightly rounds; Macbeth and his ambitious lady twirled their bloody daggers; and the "Elder and Younger Brothers" disputed their right of heirship in succession. Then I believe we had "Fiasco," which proved a *fiasco*, and an operatic piece, gloriated by the title of the "Cricket Match," which proved anything but a *hit*, and would not have succeeded even at *Batty's*. Things began to decline, and money to flow out of the managerial treasury, to very little purpose. At length came the startling phrase,

which, if ever I keep a carriage, (a poetical license,) I shall adopt as a motto

“ York, you're wanted.”

Mr. Anderson said to me, *you* who have made so many strange hits for other people, why can't you make one for me? I was not engaged as a writer, but as reader, consequently, not bound to undertake the former duty. Still, as our mighty barque was in a perilous position, I was not the man not to stretch out my grasp to the hand in distress held above the water.

Outside the theatre, I met an old and trusty ally of mine, Mons. Laurent, a gentleman who knew everything. I enquired of him if he could tell me of any subject, whereby to save a falling state. He told me that there was an opera playing in Paris which, though not crowned with the most unanimous success there, he thought, as a melodrame, I could make something of. It was called—

L'Enfant Prodigue, viz., Azaël.

What is it they say about a nod being as good as a wink? On my way home, I

looked in at Jeff's, the French publisher, in Burlington Arcade, who quickly put me in possession of the "Prodigal Son," "L'Enfant Prodigue," that is to say, Azael; and, in a very brief space from that time, my friend, Anderson, was in full possession of my M.S., not a translation, although founded on the French piece—which French piece, by the way at the Opera, in the Haymarket, proved quite a failure. Added to which knowledge I had the consoling gratification of being told by an old croaking veteran actor in the Theatre, that *no* Egyptian piece had *ever* yet answered on the English stage. If that be a correct statement, then I have written the *only* successful Egyptian drama of this country, and blow my own trumpet accordingly.

Things inside the camp were in too desperate a state to stand shilly shally; dresses were making; scenes painting; the manager sword in hand, ready to take all London by surprise, when his energies received a considerable damp by the inertia of his forces.

It was not one person in the piece grumbled at his, or her part, but *all* and *every one* of them, the manager himself, who was to play the Prodigal Son, each judging by his own part, predicted nothing but failure, except Fanny Vining. I am quite sure that any individual, not a theatrical, judging only by *his own part*, would pity an author placed in such a position. I felt that this Azael would make a hit nevertheless, and for my *own credit sake*, wished anxiously to bring it out; my former victories did not seem to give me the slightest influence; I was scarcely listened to. So much for a captain of forces, whatever he *has* done, all goes for nothing, if a repulse is apprehended only at the next attack. My old friend Vandenhoff, compared his part with the Jew, in the "Jewess," and I honestly confess that I do not feel disposed to gratify friend Planché, by the effect of that mortifying comparison. Then a principal actress assailed me with giving *her* a part little better than Millwood. I always succeeded best

with the tender hearts of the ladies, and humbly enquired of the lady in question, "Then you do think it a *better* part than Millwood?"

"Well certainly, but not much!" sneeringly.

I continued, quietly, "A *great* actress played Millwood. I never had the happiness to see her act; but I have heard her name *mentioned*; it was *Sarah Siddons*."

"Mrs. Siddons play Millwood?"

"Certainly, and this, *you* admit, is a better part."

The prompter's boy called the lady, and I heard of no more dissatisfaction.

Then there were two other *gentlemen* cast two parts, in their *own estimation* quite unworthy of *their* superior talents. These two great favourites of the public, going out of the theatre after the reading, met Mr. Wilmot, who had been prompter in the theatre, in Mr. Macready's time, but retired, (independent). Wilmot was an oracle in the theatre, and deserved to be so. For

a clear-headed, honest opinion, he had not his equal.

Conversation.

Wilmot. "Well what's going on inside?"

Gents. "New piece read; such a piece; not one tidy part."

Wil. "Good! then you can't quarrel about which shall get the best."

Gents. "Ugh! We shall throw our parts up, we've left them on the table." (Scornfully.)

Wil. "Indeed! what's the name of the piece?"

Gents. "Ridiculous; 'The Prodigal Son!'"

Wil. "'The Prodigal Son?' Is it possible the license has been gained for *such* a title?"

Gents. "Oh yes!" (American imitation.)

Wil. "Then there must be *something* extraordinary in the piece. Who's the author?"

Gent. "Oh! Fitzball!"—*depreciatingly.*

Wil. "Fitzball! ah! now I understand—he knows *well* what he's about, this

proves it ; added to which, I always think there's a luck about him. My dear *friends* this piece will prove a *tremendous hit*, take *my* word for it ; go back at once, recover possession of your parts from the table, and set about studying them as fast as possible."

Wilmot was quite right in his prognostication ; the piece, *when* produced, did make a decided hit, ran an immense number of nights ; and but for the termination of Mr. Anderson's engagement, would have run another hundred, with the greatest ease, and have brought many thousands. I relate all these circumstances for the encouragement of younger dramatists, who, in my *peculiar line*, may come after me. Courage !

"The Prodigal Son" is a charming and interesting story, attached to which, it has a sweet religious tendency and one of the finest morals on the stage. These were its exquisite points, scarcely perceivable, if taken in *parts*, but looked on as a whole, a perfect harmony. Anderson played Azael ; *inspired*, as it were, to the attempt. Miss

Fanny Vining, (who never complained, under all circumstances the wisest policy. A great actor can make *something* of a *little* ; but your grumblers, I have invariably found, make *very little* of *much*,) as the Jew's daughter, left nothing to be wished for ; neither did Vandenhoff, who was afterwards complimented by poetical effusions in the papers, which he showed me himself. Eventually, *religious* people of almost all denominations came to witness this spectacle, and I am quite sure, from the general burst of tears, into which I have seen, over and over again, the house dissolve at its conclusion, that if religious pieces were allowed to be produced *by proper people*, at *proper* seasons, in this country, it would do more to soften humanity, than all the lectures that the finest orator ever yet poured forth from the rostrum.*

* William Fitzstephen, in his *Descriptio nobilissimæ Civitatis Londinæ*, says, London instead of common interludes has plays of a more holy subject, representing those miracles which the holy confessors wrought, or of the sufferings wherein the glorious constancy of the martyrs

Sir Henry Bishop.

My old and valued friend to the *last*, for his son told me that he spoke of me with enthusiasm, in his dying moments. Sir Henry Bishop paid the great debt of nature, and although, of late years, illness and circumstances had kept us much apart, the last time he was at our house, he came to give away my daughter on her wedding day, and made a very elegant and impressive speech. A wedding day, in my mind, to those who are most interested, is anything but a festive day, a day of smiles certainly, but a day also of *real* tears. Singular enough, the next time I visited Sir Henry's house, was to be present at the marriage of his daughter. I don't recollect ever speaking to him on any occasion after *that*. I was once present when he directed some concert given in the St James's Theatre; the perceptible change which had come over him, was painful to

did appear. This author was a monk, residing at Canterbury, in the reign of Henry the II., and died in the reign of Richard I., 1191.

witness; it was evident that he was suffering greatly, from some bodily infirmity, which proved to be the case, and very shortly after he was no more. Bishop was princely, as he was dreamy in his ideas. Of expense he seemed to have no calculation, and foresaw no calamity till it fell upon him. What the English world of music owes Bishop, is scarcely to be understood, much more appreciated, in these advanced days of the divine art. Choristers that performed in cathedrals and churches, principally in oratorios and sacred compositions, at grand festivals, Handel, Haydn, and so forth, neither could, nor would have been induced formerly to sing upon the stage. Bishop had no Hullah to render him assistance, consequently, in the early operas, which he introduced to the British public, chorusses of all kinds were omitted, and not unfrequently, the tenor part itself, played by a speaker. Count Almaviva to wit, occasionally called his brother, or cousin, from the side scene to sing for him, the music which, to him,

was all Greek. Such were the barbarisms of those Pagan days, with which Bishop had for years to contend. His opera, the "Circassian Bride," was particularly unlucky; a few nights before it was to have been produced, the theatre was burnt down, and the scenes and the whole of the music consumed in the flames.* His turn of mind was most tasteful, his conversation elegant and refined; there was always something to gain, and nothing to lose, in the society of Sir Henry Bishop. I confess here, with the deepest gratitude, that to his advice and suggestion, never obtrusive, I owe many eradications of my early faults and provincialities. Many know how to correct an error; but very few, how to do so without more or less wounding the feelings. This was one of the great gifts of Sir Henry Bishop.

* When Handel produced his "Acis and Galatea," at the Haymarket, in 1732. Acis was played by Mr. Mountain, first time of his appearance on any stage. Galatea, Mrs. Arne, afterwards Mrs. Cibber, the chorus taking nearly a year to be rendered perfect.

George Rodwell

his pupil, also died nearly the same time. Speaking of advice, when I first became acquainted with Rodwell, he had the cockney way of leaving out the letter *h* in horse. I often felt inclined to correct this bad habit, so common in London, so annoying to ears not accustomed to the sound, at the same time anything but aristocratic; still, with the conviction of Gil Blas' candid opinion on the sermon of his master, for which, though urged to give it, he got kicked out of the house, I feared I might lose my friend if I attempted anything like a correction, consequently, I remained mute. I was mistaken in my reckoning, however, for some other person, Bishop, doubtless, did advise Rodwell to correct this vulgarism, and Rodwell never failed on all occasions to reproach me for what was actually timidity. I sustained a *really* great loss in the death of these two intellectual men—a loss which I shall never cease to regret—a chasm which time cannot fill up.

Who would remain in this wide world alone,
When all the heart treasured is faded and gone?

Of a sanguine and outwardly lively spirit was George Rodwell, you would have thought inexhaustible. But alone he was quite the reverse—restless, and disposed to melancholy. Many is the time that I, who am never disposed, nor never was disposed to excited over-joyousness, have exerted all my efforts to brighten up his spirits. His first compositions for me were the songs in the “Bottle Imp.” “Ye bright and glittering palaces,” “They mourn me dead in my father’s halls,” &c. Neither he nor Bishop left behind them the baton of Scazziani.*

* Valerio Scazziani was a musician in Venice during the terrible time of the Inquisition, but, being a pious and sober, as well as an industrious man, he never got into the slightest trouble with the state, and, therefore, was never placed in the dark, cold dungeons of St. Mark, nor under the scorching tiles for any offence whatever. His idol was music, in the pursuit of which he became popular. There was no concert nor performance of music, however sacred, that would have been considered complete, unless directed by the almost magical baton of Valerio Scazziani. Consequently, as Scazziani was saving, he became eventually rich. But Scazziani had a graceless, *only* son, who was a

At the conclusion of Anderson's season, "Azael" had run every night from the

libertine and a spendthrift, without industry, and without a thought or care from whence the money came, so long as he could drink, revel, and treat his gay companions, idle as himself, with flasks of Scyros wine. At length the elder Scazziani had nearly executed the most difficult passage of all—that of life—when calling his dissolute heir to his bedside—"My dear boy," he said, in a feeble voice, "I leave you my house, and the noble furniture which I have from time to time scraped together. There are some valuable paintings, too, given me by my friends Titian and Tintoretto; keep them as the apples of your two eyes, unless, indeed, you find yourself in extreme difficulties, which you can scarcely do, as there is gold enough in that cabinet, of which this is the key," taking a very ancient one of curiously wrought silver from his breast, "quite enough, with discretion, to support you like a Venetian citizen for at least sixty years. There is yet another present which I wish to accord you, namely, my old *baton*, here it is,"—and drawing the old ivory baton from under his laced pillow, he kissed and handed it to his son, adding, with his last breath,—"*Infelice*," (that was the youth's somewhat inauspicious name,) "*Infelice*, my only one, never part with this: swear never to part with your old father's baton, but keep it constantly by you wherever you may go; and if, for you are intemperate, reverse should befall you, when all is lost, and death, perhaps, is staring you in the face, break the baton as a pledge between us, and if it is permitted the spiritual to return, I will be with you in your hour of sorrow and remorse, like a fond father, whose dearest desire is to console even a dissolute child." *Infelice*, amid a torrent of tears, for withal he had an affectionate heart, took the prescribed oath, and at sunset the music

night of its production, and even then not lost one iota of its attraction, as I was as-

of poor old Scazziani's voice was heard no more. He was dead.

Infilice shut himself up in his chamber and mourned deeply for almost a week; but when Scazziani was in his marble tomb, one or two of his companions called in, with tears in their eyes, to console Infilice. Then others ventured on the tips of their toes to approach him. The Scyro wine soon, also, found its way again to his table—luxury succeeded luxury—voluptuousness after voluptuousness—extravagance after extravagance, and in less than three years from the time of his father's decease, the generous Infilice was a beggar in the streets of Venice, without a home—without a friend.

Driven by destitution, he became a gondolier, and to keep himself from starvation, for a small pittance rowed people hourly across the Grand Canal, or through the Lagunes. Unaccustomed to toil, and living so scantily, he soon fell sick, and lying upon a miserable pallet in his wretched loft, without doctor, or the means to pay for one, he determined, worn out with grief, to disburthen himself of his miserable existence, by creeping out at night and drowning himself in the deep waters of the Adriatic. Suddenly, as he was creeping forth, the thought occurred to him that he had not fulfilled the promise to his dead father—he had not broken the baton. Superstitiously as well as fortunately, he had never lost sight of it. It was concealed in the old tattered mattress on which he had passed many sleepless and feverish nights. Returning, therefore, slowly to the corner of the den, he thrust his emaciated hand into the hole gnawed by the rats, and pulled out the object of his father's last request. To break it seemed beyond his feeble strength; at length, murmuring a slight prayer, he dashed it

sured the boxes might have been taken for the next month, had it been possible to have kept open the theatre. But a variety of complicated circumstances compelled the lessee unfortunately to relinquish the management, by which, as the Great Exhibition in the new Crystal Palace in Hyde Park brought millions of strangers to town at that period, a fortune was thrown away.

It seems to me that I can remember circumstances which occurred years ago better than events of the last week ; for how it

against a stone, his pillow. It parted in an instant, and marvellous to relate, poured forth a shower of gold, which seemed to the bewildered eyes of Infelice a perfect dream of enchantment. However, gold it *was*, and falling on his knees, Infelice breathed a much more fervent prayer, during which the venerable image of his wise old father seemed to rise smilingly before him.

Infelice joyfully and eagerly gathering up the money, and replacing it carefully in the cunningly contrived hollow of the old ivory baton, thrust the whole into his tattered vest, and very speedily, instead of doctor's physic, restored his inward man with a comfortable meal, and a flask of his favourite Scyros. It soon came to be known in Venice that Infelice Scazziani had come *somehow* to a new fortune. Friends suddenly returned. But Infelice Scazziani had, in their absence, read a few smart pages in the book of adversity, and did not forget the lessons they afforded him.

happened that I was requested to write a tragedy, or by whom, for America, I cannot possibly recollect. I know that the great tragedian, Mr. Brooke, was the person fixed on to play the principal part; and, as I considered him one of the best actors of the day, I had but one wish, namely, to please him. It became evident that I did so, and yet the affair, especially as regards that gentleman, proved unsuccessful. The subject I selected was, I believe, from Heroditus, well known to the readers of ancient history, and after the encouragement bestowed on "Azael," I felt no disinclination to try once again an Egyptian subject, especially as it was intended for another country.

Nitocris, Queen of Egypt,
was therefore adopted, and rich it was in glorious qualifications for stage representation. When I had written my play, with which be sure I took time and pains, (it was a great effort, intended to have produced a great effect, in a GREAT country,) I

sent the M.S. to Mr. Brooke, who was acting at Manchester. The answer I received was one of the most flattering opinions imaginable, nothing could have been more gratifying, written by his agent, Mr. Wilton, a gentleman of high literary attainments, himself an author, and well acquainted with the acquirements for the stage. On the return of Mr. Brooke to town, he personally confirmed his perfect satisfaction and good opinion, and great terms were cheerfully awarded me. Yet all this satisfaction and good opinion, and nuggets of gold were completely overbalanced by a single circumstance, which shows on what slender and rainbow foundations the air-blown hopes of the poor dramatist rest. Tehrak, the lover of Nitocris, is an Ethiopian, and it was feared that the part of a negro would not become a favorite with an American audience ; for, although Othello might have served for a precedent, still Othello is sanctified by the name of Shakspeare. As Mr. Brooke was, therefore, to have played the

Ethiopian, this stifled the affair altogether, as regarded America. Still Mr. Brooke, with the most gentlemanly generosity, never retracted his opinion, and he it was who warmly recommended my new tragedy to Mr. Smith, of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, which recommendation was as strenuously seconded by Mr. Hall Wilton.

I had an interview in consequence of his application, with the manager of Drury Lane. Read "Nitocris" to him. It was immediately purchased and paid for, and *without affectation* or disguise, highly commended by the liberal manager, which was still more gratifying than his money, although that is a necessity without which even poets cannot carry on the battle of steam. I often think it deeply to be regretted that, like the bees, we cannot suck honey from the flowers, and so, as we are unlike other men, live on our sunny course, unlike other men also.

On the subject of this *five act* tragedy I have more to say, and more to complain

of, notwithstanding all the favour with which it was so universally received, than of any other production hitherto placed by me before my unflinching, unfailing, and least of all dreaded friend, the *Public*.

I had the honour to read the M.S. in the great saloon of the theatre, myself, an immense exertion for me ; but my hearers consisted not only of the most competent judges, but the most kind and enduring friends, namely, Mr. Barry Sullivan, Wilde, Stuart, (*the* Stuart,) Sterling, the stage director ; Miss Glynn, Miss Cleveland, Miss Devear, Mrs. Selby, the gracious manager, Mr. Smith himself, and a variety of *strangers*, of whom I knew nothing. My bodily strength is very inadequate to do myself justice, as a reader of a heavy dramatic work ; but all listened to me with the most indulgent interest, and the result was general approval ; not one part relinquished by a single actor, as in *Azael* ; which is the greatest proof an author, for the stage, can judge by ; no aside requestings to be

written up, not a dissenting voice, not one murmur. A nobleman deeply connected with the pecuniary interests of the theatre, —himself an author—read this tragedy, (without my knowing it,) opposed to the production of tragedy as inattractive, gave his unqualified approval. Ryder told me also, that Barry Sullivan, behind my back, spoke of it as a dramatic production, little inferior to the best works of the kind, on the stage; Mr. Stewart said nearly the same. The opinion of Miss Glynn was equally gratifying; that of Mrs Selby, still more so, for this reason, she had but a very indifferent part for talent like hers, and therefore, was not at all likely to be led away from her sincerity, by any sinister motive, as regarded her sincere opinion. I am thus particular in these facts, because it has been affirmed that I, like most authors, considerably overrated my own abilities, as regarded this tragedy, but it will be seen by the above, that I did not utterly depend on my own judgment; here was the judgment

of a *real dramatic jury*, on whose verdict, I think any author, without being accused of vanity, might have been proud to rely.

To proceed, I shall nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice, but merely relate circumstances exactly as they occurred, for the amusement, as well as information, of such of my readers as may feel interested in theatrical matters.

Our rehearsals were progressing admirably, under the active management of Mr. Sterling, a most able and intelligent man. Scenery of the most gorgeous description, from the truest and remotest authorities, and properties and costumes, for which the British Museum, and every known and available work, had been searched by that celebrated antiquarian, —— Keen, Esq. Those costumes were perfect; the most unique and beautiful, perhaps, ever placed on the English stage. Mr. Smith seemed resolved to spare neither trouble nor expense; one morning, on the stage, a gentleman addressing Mr. Smith, after

having listened for some time to the language, with the greatest attention, said, "Why Smith, where the deuce have you found an author to write such a piece?"

Smith in his off-hand way, replied,—
"Oh! Fitz!"—

"Who's Fitz?"

"Why, there he stands; Mr. Fitzball."

Sir William de Bathe turned round, for it was he, and, at once introducing himself to me, with a bow, and an air of courtesy, for which he has no superior, paid me the highest compliments respecting the language, which he said he had been listening to with the utmost pleasure and surprise. If "Nitocris" did me no other essential good it secured me the friendship of that most excellent and amiable gentleman, under whose hospitable roof I have since, times and often, found myself perfectly at home, and in the very best society, with every sincere anxiety for my comfort and prosperity. Thus every succeeding day continued to bring out some

new agreeable event. All went calmly on, my Egyptian galley, with her lotus-leaf oars, and light gauzy sails, seemed to be floating up the lympid Nile, before a golden wind, when lo, a dark speck appeared in the horizon, and of whom should it assume the form, the reader will never guess, but of my old friend, *comic* Charles Matthews, returned from a tour. He was, in fact, *the* acting manager, and seemed to me to roll out of a large walnut shell, on the stage, like some spirit of drollery, in whose presence Melpomene herself dries up her tears, and begins to laugh. This gentleman, and I have no doubt, with every *good* intention on his part, thought proper to read the piece to the performers over again. Now, I appeal to any person who has ever seen Mr. Charles Matthews act his comic parts on the stage, whether they can help an involuntary smile at the bare idea of the expression of his face, reading a tragedy; of course the effect was that which would have been produced by his reading one of his

own Olympic burlesques ; I confess I could not resist laughing myself, *till tears trickled down my cheeks*. As may very naturally be supposed, I was inwardly and *deeply* mortified ; at the same time, I do not mean to infer that he *intended* to turn the play into ridicule, but the more serious he appeared, the more laughable it became, and what was most extraordinary, he seemed the only person unconscious of the effect produced ; and I sincerely believe, had he felt what *I* suffered on the occasion, would have been the first to pity me.

The rehearsals now, that Mathews had possessed himself of the subject, proceeded as before. Mathews did his best to set all right ; but, as the slightest word he uttered, attempting to be serious, caused a titter, Melpomene, in a panic, picked up her dagger and velvet robe, and quitted the theatre. In fact, the comic muse, in cap and bells, was getting up a serious tragedy. The young lion was playing kitten-like gambols with a scull, and the effect may be

imagined. I have heard from a very clever person too, that in rehearsing a tragedy, there is not the slightest occasion to speak in a dismal voice, or to put on a long melancholy face, so long as you assume it at night. I know not if this opinion be correct; I must leave that to be decided by the experience of such men as Mr. Macready and Mr. Charles Kean. Certain it is, that the rehearsals of my tragedy, the latter ones, were anything but *melancholy*; and, I have no doubt, my *invisible friend*, the reviewer, in the *Times*, who said the morning after its production, that it was dull, (I never heard of a *cheerful* tragedy) would have said quite the reverse had he been lucky enough to have witnessed the rehearsals; and I'm sorry he did not, because he might then have indulged in mirth to his heart's satisfaction, and, perhaps, have been induced to give a different verdict. I should not have been sent to my account so

Unhouselled, unannointed, unannealed.

It may have been, as the author, I saw these

proceedings with jaundiced eyes. Still it was a new way of setting about serious matters. I cannot imagine Liston getting up Hamlet, although I have heard, he attempted to play it; nor Charles Mathews preaching one of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons. I esteem Charles Mathews, especially as a comedian—everybody does. He has an extraordinary warrant from the world for doing whatever he thinks proper with the world; and people only laugh. As a comic actor, I glorify his great and irresistible qualities. If I had a comedy that he would act in, or even produce, I should consider myself a made dramatic author; but as an interpreter of tragedy! *Oh! let him never more be officer of mine!* The frogs in the fable! the frogs in the fable! A man would assuredly laugh and dance at the funeral of his grandmother, if some one all the time kept tickling the soles of his feet. Welcome back droll Charles to your native land—there is nothing like your genius here; I am amongst the first and *sincerest* to

welcome your arrival. Forgive my speaking ! but do not refer to my *comic* tragedy ; if you do, as your dear father used to say—“ That boy will be the death of me.” He was as *serious* as Charles Mathews could be ; but, much as I liked him, having always received from him the greatest kindness, I should have liked much better, I honestly acknowledge, to have seen him in some of his great gun tricks, convulsing the audience with laughter, rather than directing my tragedy. And, I must here assert, without wishing to give the least offence, that *any* comic man getting up a tragedy in spite of every attempt to subdue himself, is the *wrong* man in the *wrong place* ; all I mean to infer by this is, that I should have preferred the assistance of the *humblest* tragedian, more especially Mr. Edward Sterling, to that of the most popular comic actor on the face of the globe ; and I have, no doubt, eccentric as the idea may seem, and ungrateful as I may appear, that there are *many* persons of taste, and genius, too, who coincide with me.

We come now to a grand night rehearsal of this tragedy, which was already announced by innumerable bills stuck all over the metropolis in grotesque Egyptian characters which you would have suspected nobody could read. How the public got into possession of the great secret of the announcement, I am utterly at a loss to comprehend; but, in London, it may well be said, there are clever people in the streets *constantly* finding out every thing to enlighten the natives, who themselves find out so little. But to the night rehearsal. It seems by this time, notwithstanding my nervous trepidity, that "Nitrocris" had greatly recovered her dignity, and that the manager had not lost a particle of *his first* impression or courage. As a proof of this, he gave a most splendid supper to upwards of eighty gentlemen, in the grand saloon of the theatre. I was taken by surprise. Mr. Smith wrote me word that he had something to say to me on the subject of the piece, and should be in the saloon waiting to speak

with me. Judge of my astonishment when I entered, on seeing the magnificent tables sumptuously set out for so large an assemblage of persons. I tried to effect my retreat, but that was not permitted. Mr. Smith, who well knew my nervous tendency, had good naturedly hit upon this ruse to make me one of the party. I had no alternative, therefore, but to stay, sit down amongst the gentlemen chiefly of the press, who now arrived in double quick march, and remain silent—I hoped unnoticed. In an hour or so, the rehearsal would commence, and the company of critics adjourn to the boxes; gentlemen of the highest order of intellect and learning, in whose presence a man of my, anything but elocutionary talent, rather than have opened his lips, would have, gladly, gone twenty miles out of the way. Eating and drinking was not slow to commence. I almost think they began toasting before the eating and drinking had come to a conclusion. First, as in duty bound, her Majesty in bumpers

then the Prince Consort, then the army and navy, the drama. All this time, I remained perfectly out of sight, as I hoped and believed. A popular author, opposite, made a very good speech, indeed, respecting the drama. Looking at my watch, I rejoiced to think it was near the hour of adjournment, when that wicked wag, Stocquiller, rose and said it was all very well drinking the drama, and speaking about defunct authors, but the living author of that night—the author of the forthcoming new tragedy, was the author whose health he wished to propose. I ought to feel an undying gratitude, when I remember the unanimous burst of approval with which this was received. The reader, who by this time must have gained some insight into my *really* retiring character, will be astonished to learn, as I *am* now myself, that I actually stood up on my legs, and *made a speech*—not a long one, to be sure, but which was received in a manner so indulgent as to have gratified any one, no matter how ambitious of ap-

plause. Respectfully, also, had it been listened to. But the most gratifying feeling of all, was the evident pleasure this unlooked-for event gave the manager, who, with his dark eyes sparkled approval, as if I had accomplished some great triumph. In the next instant, I was reseated wondering at myself, when a gentleman, not theatrical, an entire stranger, introduced himself to my notice, by observing that he had that evening listened in perfect delight to some beautiful speaking, the reply I made was, the *truth*, that the gentleman opposite had made a *very fine* speech on the *drama*; to which the gentleman answered, "excuse my taking the liberty, but your speech was one of the most to my satisfaction. It was so very natural; so to the purpose: neither too short, nor too long; nor a word too little, nor a word too much." This was *exactly* what he said, then turning from me to the eloquent speaker on the drama, whom I had just complimented, he added, don't you think so Mr. —, who are yourself so eloquent? The reply was, I

don't *write my* speeches before I come. Now this, if not intended as such, was even a *greater* compliment than the others. It proved to me that he thought it must have been accurately considered; that I had not rendered myself quite ridiculous. Mr. Smith well knew I had not the least notion of such a meeting, or, so far from writing a speech, with the slightest hope of the courage to speak it myself, I should have retired considerably out of the way from the apprehension of rendering myself terribly absurd. The dressed rehearsal was now commenced. At the request of the manager, several of the performers presented themselves in the saloon, that the beauty of the costumes and their costliness, might be closely examined. Miss Glynn, as "Nitocris," came in in her classic vestal habit. Nothing had been seen like it since the days of Ancient Egypt, which, with her beauty, her fine commanding figure and queenly expression, elicited the most fervent and delighted approval, from that enlightened assembly.

The reviewers and other gentlemen then retired to the boxes. "Nitocris" was acted that night before that select audience classically, correct, as it was never *acted afterwards*, although represented every consecutive night for upwards of nearly three months, as it will never or can be acted again. At the fall of the curtain, every one expressed his gratification, and all coming round me, paid me the highest respect and commendation. *That was the proudest, the most triumphant moment of my dramatic career.*

The next night witnessed the production of the tragedy before the public, when circumstances presented themselves still more extraordinary than those I have just related. I scarcely need remark, with the papers and placards, had the house been twice the size, it would not have held the audience which attempted to force itself inside its walls. For my own part I had no fixed place to repair to. I was going under the piazza into the theatre, as is my

custom, being so practical, to satisfy my mind concerning the setting of the first scene, when I encountered a gentleman, an entire stranger, who had been at the supper, and frequently on the stage during the numerous rehearsals. He inquired of me where I was going to sit? I told him that really I did not know. "Oh! then," was his reply, most politely, "I have taken a stage box. I expect my wife in the carriage directly—you must sit with us." Grateful for such kind attention, I modestly attempted to withdraw myself. He would hear of *no* refusal. At that instant the lady, a *perfect* lady, with several others arrived in a splendid carriage, dressed, as was the gentleman himself, in the most *distingué* and fashionable style. Nothing could be more polite—nothing could be more refined than their attention. I sat *retired*, at my own wish, with that elegant party and that *gentleman*, so amiable and so truly polite, on the first night of my new

tragedy. And who think you, reader, the *gentleman* was?

Mr. Robson, who was transported for defrauding the Crystal Palace!

But I shall have something more to say of him after the fall of the curtain. The tragedy commenced: it would have been strange indeed if such scenery and such gorgeous properties had not drawn down the loudest approval. In justice to myself, I think I am entitled to add, so did the speeches of Miss Glynn, Mr. Barry Sullivan, and Mr. Stuart in particular, not to forget Mr. Edgar, Miss Cleveland, and Mrs. Selby. Nothing could have gone more satisfactorily. The scene where the *king is assassinated*, a scene terrible to write, and dangerous in the extreme to put on the stage, drew forth a burst of applause as if the whole audience had but one mighty voice. At the conclusion of the third act came a procession, (I detest processions.) This procession was so *immensely* long, hundreds of persons walked on in the most

magnificent dresses, (the Queen's dress alone costing upwards of two hundred pounds,) and bearing sumptuous properties, vast idols in silver and in gold, whose heads absolutely touched the top of theatre. A small snake carried across, with a woman's face, absolutely cost twenty-five pounds. All this was too vast, too antique, and too learned for the audience to appreciate in any degree as it deserved. They did appreciate it, however, for its glitter, as they would have done the procession in Aladdin; and the curtain fell on the magnificent tableau of this scene with unmixed admiration, approval, and wonder. Indeed, at one time I sincerely believe that Mr. Smith would not have considered it unreasonable to have laid out a hundred thousand pounds on this tragedy, as the Athenians did in the single decoration of one of the tragedies of Sophocles.

Before the falling of the green curtain, a *dreadful* feeling came over me that something was wrong. My heart failed me en-

tirely. I could neither go round to inquire, nor remain in the theatre. I went out into the street that the cool air might revive me, and then went home by myself. The truth was, although the scenery was entered in the bills, the two last acts of the tragedy were *omitted*; and when the curtain re-ascended, and a common-place *farce* scene presented itself, the confusion is more easily imagined than described. The public were justly and wisely indignant to the highest degree. What frenzy could have dictated such a proceeding I must leave the reader to conjecture. I only marvel they did not break every chandelier in the house; as it was, a scene of dreadful confusion prevailed. Managers came on and went off as they entered. The pleasant names they were called would not have been agreeable to ears refined. The public insisted on the last two acts: that was impossible. They were promised, however, the next night, and the promise kept. But that was, alas, too late. The leading journal, which I

scarcely blame, especially as no writer for that paper was at the night rehearsal, pronounced it *dull* and *incomprehensible*, as truly so it must have seemed to *him*. This verdict took the lead before all the other papers, which were universally in praise, because the world is invariably inclined to take the worst side; and although this tragedy ran under these appalling circumstances for nearly three months, it never recovered the shock of *paralysis* it sustained on the first night. I make no comments—I attach no individual blame. It is certainly a marvellous dramatic event—a conundrum, which I leave to others, *if they can*, to find out. On that night another surprising circumstance occurred to me. My house was besieged with gentlemen, utter strangers, who came down and insisted upon seeing me: some to condole with me—some to blame me very much, although not present, for not addressing the public. For my own part, I seemed to think myself in a dream; that all I had

witnessed for the last two nights, and was still witnessing, was a delusion. To say nothing of the deep *despairing disappointment* of a *poor* author, who had, as *he* hoped, in the autumn of his life, lit up an *inextinguishable* flame, to burn through the winter of his years—perhaps over his ashes. It may be some day that some *actor* or some *actress* may take a liking to one of the parts in this original tragedy, and without gorgeous scenery, dresses, or decoration, where it simply tells its own story, it may become all that I anticipated. And of such a frail hope is the feather at the bottom of Pandora's box, which wakes up the heart to its last vibration, the safety valve of life—the bountiful reserve of Providence.

It was remarkable how public sympathy followed me, as respects this play; not so much as regarded the piece itself; not so much as regarded the position of the play itself; but people thought I had been unfairly dealt with, by the observations in the

Times, and wished me to address a letter to the editor ; I did not. Such proceedings too generally make things worse, and draw down the thunder on your own head ; after all, I still consider those observations no more than *truth*. The tragedy as represented *was* obscure, mysterious, and dull, to use Claude Melnotte's words, "as *they* did it ;" a journalist is not supposed to be gifted with the supernatural faculty of knowing "that the greatest is behind." A gentleman, a Mr. Montalba, the same gentleman who spoke to me at the supper table, wrote me a most kind letter, inviting me to his house. Like Patience on the monument, I felt disposed to keep company only with solitude and vexation ; but a friend, a *most* sincere one, urged me to accept the invitation, with the remonstrance that I always had shut myself up too much for my own advantage. I went accordingly. On arriving at the mansion, for it was a mansion in Oakley Square, seeing the house brilliantly lighted up, and in the sensitive state I was, my heart some-

what failed me, but for mere shame I do believe I should have retreated. I knocked, and was most graciously received by the gentleman himself, who putting aside the servant, with his own hand took off my cloak, displaying thereby, most *distinctly*, the *perfect* gentleman. He then conducted me into a room, in which were assembled thirty or forty other gentlemen, by whom I was received with the most *marked* deference and congratulations; I never was more astonished in my life, nor needs the reader be surprised at it, when he comes to learn that this company consisted of some of the first talent in the kingdom, one in particular, whose acquaintance was excessively gratifying to *me*, Bailey, the immortal sculptor of Eve at the fountain; I had written some lines on that celebrated statue, and published them, they were genuine, as an impulse of the gratification at the delight I experienced in first viewing that magnificent and interesting work of art. Little did I then suppose I should ever know its

gifted author. There was also my old acquaintance, the orator of the supper table in the saloon, on the night of the dressed rehearsal ; who, if he was a little brusque on the former occasion, made more than ample amends on this. Not only speaking highly of my tragedy, but by the mere force of memory, making a quotation therefrom.

“ Quickly’s the word, for if the offence grow up,
Like the usurping tree, whose shooting boughs
Drop, and strike root again,
Then shoot forth others,
Making one only forest of itself,
This Ethiop,
Will, for *himself* alone,
O’erspread the land.”

He was himself the author of a fine tragedy, which, luckily for him, was not *too well* got up. Marston was there, the author of many highly successful and beautiful plays, brought out chiefly, I think, under the tasteful, never-failing influence of Mr. Charles Kean, and of such gems as these, the whole company was composed ; there were also many of our finest painters, one in particular, a gentleman advanced in life,

who reminded me, in his personal appearance, of some of the finest portraits of Rubens. I shall never forget him, nor the elegant and refined speech that he made, about the absolute *necessity* of worldly care ; which he illustrated by the lives of great men, especially that of Raphael. In a rich, consoling voice, too, which seemed to breathe with the music of heaven.

I next received a crested note from *Mr. Robson*, inviting me to Kilburn Priory, to meet there, also, another party of well wishers. This, however, I did decline, out of no disrespect to the writer, who, at all events had conducted himself in the handsomest manner to me, but I was ill, my heart had become affected, and glad I was afterwards, when Mr. William Beverley* in-

* The mention of William Beverley's name, recalls to my mind an amusing anecdote. I was on a visit to him recently at Hampton, within a few yards of Garrick's Villa, on the lovely banks of the Thames. In the evening he took me and his charming wife for a row in a boat, by moonlight, on the water, the stars shone brilliantly into the blue stream, as we almost silently glided on. I started

formed me that he also had been invited and declined, and rejoiced when he was informed that the party consisted of upwards of eighty or ninety personages, who were compelled, many of them, to sit upon the drawing-room stairs. From Mr. Robson, however, there was no escaping; I was reading one day in my room, when a knock came at my door, and Mr. Robson was introduced in *propria persona*; he was a very handsome young man, most agreeable in his manners, with a very fascinating address. He had come, he said, to invite me to dine with him, and could take no refusal, if I was particular, I was, his wife said, to

something about the plurality of worlds, at which Beverley, bursting forth into a sort of rhapsody, made some enquiry as to what the end of the world would be like, or *was* like, I could not exactly define which, as he became very metaphysical. The next morning we were blackberrying in some green lanes, when we suddenly came upon a small solitary public house, which, by the sign over the door, proved to be the "End of the world." "There," I observed, pointing, "you wanted to know something about the end of the world." "Well!" he replied, facetiously, "I should never have thought the end of the world would turn out a *Tea Garden*."

select my own dinner, and my own guests; and as he kept his carriage, he would call for me at five any evening, and send me home at *any* hour. Such kindness it was not possible to decline, therefore I fixed upon the afternoon. The dinner I cared little about, the simpler the better, I left it to *madame*; society, I wished for none but theirs, and with truth, for she was quite a lady, and he exceedingly accomplished. He had produced a play called "Love and Loyalty," with the Wallacks, at the Marylebone; I saw it represented. Mr. W. Wallack and his wife, (one of the best actresses we have,) both played in it, and a very good drama it was, the language sparkling and *beautiful*.

At the time appointed he came for me in a handsome carriage; I went with him to Kilburn Priory, where I met with a most hospitable reception. The only visitor, beside myself, was one of our popular novellists. He dropped in after dinner. No attention was spared to render me

comfortable, or to make me happy. In the course of conversation, when we were alone, Robson asked me the extraordinary question, what I thought he *was*, when I first saw him on the stage, at the rehearsal : whether I took him for a gentleman or not ?

My matter-of-fact reply was, "Just to prove to you how *easily* even close observers of character may be mistaken, I was puzzled, and had my doubts."

"From what cause?"

"Not from your manners, not from your conversation ; certainly not from your looks. But you wore *white kid* gloves."

"Was that any inference?"

"It was my old-fashioned habit to think so, in the morning at a stage rehearsal ; but you see I was *quite* mistaken." I then complimented him on the success of his drama, his accomplishments, his home, his interesting wife, his domestic happiness ; for, with all these blessings, he *seemed* to me most bountifully endowed. And I'm afraid I turned my eyes a *little* comparatively into my

own circumstances and, marvelled, as we are apt to do, why God, who is all-bountiful, still makes such mighty differences between man and man. Alas ! I little knew the meaning of the sigh which escaped poor Robson's lips ! I must pity him ; he was so young, so amiable. He got up, took from a bookcase one of his plays, " Love and Loyalty," and writing on it, handed the book to me with the greatest courtesy. What he wrote was this—" From one who aspires one day to be
" as popular an author as Mr. Fitzball.
" From, &c., Robson."

We were now interrupted by the arrival of the celebrated novelist, with whom Robson gambled and played like a boy till coffee was served. Then Mrs. Robson sang and played the piano sweetly, but mournfully. The evening came to a close, and I *was sent* home as promised.

From that, to me, happy evening, I never met Robson but once, and then I *did* see what appeared to me a change in his usually bright manner. That which had been na-

tural, had become like acting. I could not account for it in a man whom I thought gifted with every earthly blessing. Unfortunately, the hidden canker was but too soon explained by the papers; and this gifted and sunny creature, not able to resist temptation, had become a *felon* and an *outlaw*. It is certainly inconsistent with the *just laws* of society, to compassionate crime of any kind. But, however wrong it may be, I cannot reflect upon all the qualifications of that poor deluded young man, without sincerely deploring his infirmity, and feeling for him, and for his unhappy wife, the deepest regret. I do hope, after the expiration of years, he is still very young, that it may not be too late for him to return, with convicted and amended feelings, into the honourable path of society he could well have adorned, which, by his delinquency, he has forfeited, and which, under other circumstances, he was so well calculated to embellish.

Some time previously to all this, having gone down to visit my daughter, who resides

by the sea side, I wrote an original comedy —this comedy I resolved to inflict on poor Buckstone. It was called, then, the “Haughty Word,” which has since degenerated into the “Widow’s Wedding;” though the widow, even up to the time of my writing this, is still unwed. She has been accepted and highly approved, thrown off many of her weeds; but still a widow. Such is the fortune of war, the playwright’s war, especially.

First and foremost, I had forwarded my new original play to the manager of the Haymarket. I know not if he was enchanted; but he accepted and returned me a kind reply. Mrs. Fitzwilliam wrote also to me: she was a very old friend, and had played for me in one of my early dramas, at the Surrey, called “Laurette,” from Marmontel, which, by the way, was exceedingly well spoken of by the papers. She was then Miss Copeland, a charming singer, and very pretty, and as good an actress, and always

so amiable, as was her letter respecting my comedy, which, with Buckstone's, I insert—

Mr. Buckstone's Letter.

“ MY DEAR FITZBALL,—

“ I only last night (Sunday) was enabled to get time to read your comedy. I'm somewhat puzzled about it. The tone and conduct of the story belong more to William and Mary, or Queen Anne's time, than to the present day, or I should say, that of James II. The gipsy scene and wedding would be more in unison with that period. Then there's a difficulty in the umbrella scene. When was the first umbrella used? I think in the early part of George III.'s time. At all events, I should recommend the scene being removed from the present day. We cannot act the piece till after Xmas. Are you content to wait?

“ Yours truly,

“ B. BUCKSTONE.”

Then in the same envelope, a few cheering lines from dear Mrs. Fitzwilliam.

“ MY DEAR MR. FITZBALL,—

“ I participated in the reading last
 “ evening. Mr. Buckstone sees a great deal
 “ of good in it, with a few easy alterations.
 “ I will play Fanny ; but instead of young,
 “ timid, and beautiful, you must make
 “ her jolly and good natured as in the
 “ ‘ Rough Diamond.’

“ Yours ever,

“ FANNY FITZWILLIAM.”

You see, by the kind encouraging note slipped into Buckstone's envelope, how amiable and considerative she was for others. How sensible as to what would suit herself,—a sense which applies to so very few of her sex, decidedly on the stage.

The alterations made, apparently pleased Buckstone, who, at my request, agreed to draw his pen through the whole. We had rowed together in the same boat before ; and at the conclusion of Miss Cushman's en-

gagement, some time after, it was decided my piece should be produced. We still were at fault. I wanted a fine gentleman, and a fine lady. I hoped Miss Cushman, that capital actress, might have played my fine lady, and Barry Sullivan, a gentleman "every inch," have been engaged for the other part. But Miss Cushman had a new play to bring out, from the pen of Mr. Chorley, and it would have been presumptuous of me to expect her to turn aside her thoughts an instant from a great part, which I know absorbed entirely—*very properly so*, all her attention. Mr. Chorley's tragedy was brought out, shortly after which, Miss Cushman, I believe, returned to America, and the "Haughty Word" was on the eve of being spoken, that is to say, put into rehearsal, when, sad, alas! to relate, poor Mrs. Fitzwilliam, whom I had seen well, and in excellent spirits a few days before, was taken suddenly ill, and *died*. She wrote me a note to go to the theatre, where she wished to consult me about the costumes

—I think it was on the following Monday. In compliance with her injunction, I was repairing to the Haymarket Theatre, where I expected to find her, when I met Mr. Walter Lacey near the Opera House, who communicated to me the fatal news. If ever I felt a grief akin to that I felt for my dear wife, it was the grief I felt for poor Mrs. Fitzwilliam. A kinder heart than hers never beat in female bosom. Having both seen and heard from her so previously, it seemed impossible that she should be no more ; but it was too true. Every self-interested feeling was absorbed in regret for the *woman*. Her worth, her talents, were alike irreparable : the one, to hearts, in which *she* was the life ; the others, to the theatre, of which *they* were the life also. I wrote on that occasion a few lines, which appeared in the different papers, and also in my “ House to Let.” I intrude them here, not from any vanity as respects their trifling merits, but with a *sincere* desire to prolong her remembrance by the very best means in my power

L I N E S

*In memory of Mrs. Fitzwilliam, (who died Monday,
September 11th, 1854.)*

Gone? while yet upon my ear,
Like music's sweetest tone,
The echo of her voice I hear,
They tell me she is gone!
I scarcely can believe it true,
That thus the leaf is shed,
Which hung so green upon the bough—
Now living! and now dead!

Oh! I had known her many years,
In young, in happier hours,
With smiles to chase the poet's fears,
And strew his path with flow'rs.
In crazy, wandering Madge of yore,
So thrilling was her lay,
How oft I felt the tears flow o'er,
I had no pow'r to stay.

Yet those same lips, and those same eyes,
Could sparkle into mirth,
As when through clouds, the summer skies
Burst blue, and golden forth.
Still all her mimic powers of art
Fell short, though great they were,
Of that great goodness of her heart,
So gentle, yet sincere.

And as with histrionic sway,
None mightier skill could blend;
So none, with sweeter truths, could play,
The woman, and the friend.
Dig her grave 'neath hawthorn bowers,
Where silence loves to sleep;
Cover it o'er with sweet wild flow'rs,
Then come with me and weep.

In consequence of these poor lines, a very humble tribute to her memory, Mr. Buckstone wrote me a beautiful letter full of the deepest feeling and sensibility; as did also her son, expressing his gratitude. But, alas! in those cases, sympathy can only alleviate. Time, alone, can close the wound. Some months after, I received another letter from Mr. Buckstone, wherein he spoke of the comedy, and his sincere desire to keep faith with me; but where were we to find an actress capable of sustaining a part written entirely for the talent of Mrs. Fitzwilliam?—her appearance, her simplicity, her vivacity? It was not possible. Added to which, there was a brokenheartedness about him at the idea of playing it with another person. It seemed to annoy and disgust him; I felt it so, and no longer urged its performance. That he was quite truthful in his expressions, is clearly proved by the following extract from a letter on the subject by young Fitzwilliam, who was at the time very ill of a decline, and has since,

also, there cannot be a doubt, with his mother in *Heaven*.

“ DEAR SIR,—

“ There is music in your play; and it
“ it will afford me *great* pleasure to do any-
“ thing I can for the piece, which, I hope,
“ will soon be produced—and that with
“ genuine success. From what I heard my
“ poor mother say of it, I do not doubt it
“ for a moment. Wishing you a happy
“ new year, and many of them, believe me.

“ Yours sincerely,

“ EDWARD FITZWILLIAM.

“ Jan. 3rd, 1855.”

This season I again returned to the sea-side to visit my daughter—my only inducement. The sea-side *never* agrees with me, much as I love to tread its golden shores, and mark and muse upon the flight of the white, wave-skimming seabird; or ponder over the heaven-tinted shells, and listen to the sad murmur of the mysterious waters. All these charms soon give way to the beating

in the head, which invariably ensues ; and I speedily begin to wish myself once again wandering through the inland hills and valleys of beautiful Hampstead Heath, which, although called a cockney rurality, being so near to London has no rival in my mind for salubrity, or sylvan beauty in the world—

Sweet breath of morn which Sunday's walks supplies.

Here on this hill, all redolent of health,

How exquisite thou art, gift of the skies,

The mother's blessing, and the poor man's wealth.

His *only* wealth on which he meditates,

While bending o'er his work, too oft in pain,

And ponders o'er the pleasure which awaits,

His footsteps here when Sunday comes again.

I know not exactly on which of these excursions it happened, that going down to the rocks, between Brighton and Rottendeau, for the benefit of bathing from the shore, I one day dropped my keys out of my pocket. Returning home, without discovering my loss till I arrived, I was too fatigued with the heat of the sun to retrace my steps that day. The following morning I rose early and repaired to the spot, not in

the least doubting but I should find my keys lying on the sand. I was mistaken ; my search was in vain. The morning was somewhat stormy and blustering, the waves rolled high, and the sea spray flung a sort of hazy mist towards the shore. I was stooping very low examining the crevices of the rocks, when I heard a somewhat musical voice exclaim, in solemn accents—

Demon ! demon ! what seekest thou ?

There is something startling in the word *demon*, especially when that sombre appellation is evidently addressed to one's self. And this sounded very like the appeal of *Zamiel ! Zamiel !* in the incantation scene of "*Der Freischütz*." For an instant I thought of the boy's advice to Don César de Bazan—

"Send for a priest, and confess your sins."

But, as there was no priest nearer than Brighton, neither had I any messenger to send, consequently I remembered the old adage about turn round and face the ——. I did so, when whose form, more welcome

to me than the elderly gentleman, with reverence to his name respectfully omitted, could have presented itself to my astonished and delighted gaze, than the good-looking features of my harmonious friend,

Sims Reeves;

he of the dulcet voice, who had no doubt come hither, like myself, to run over the KEYS; with this especial difference—if he ran over his keys he found them, if I ran over mine I did not. A hearty laugh was the full accompaniment to our mutual recognition. Although I had dark suspicions that this could not in fact be he of the crotchets and quavers, whom I really desired so much to see and speak to. If I called at his house, he was sure to be gone half an hour before, to vocalise at Manchester, or York, or Canterbury, or to draw tears from, or make the glasses ring in the Crystal Palace. Yet there we were, met by accident on a damp morning, by the anything but Æolian murmurs of the white and emerald waters. Yet there walked we up

and down the beach, all along the yellow sand, at least for one hour; talking of operas, music, and Balfe. We concerted a grand opera, the "Corsican Brothers." Reeves was to play himself, and his brother, and by no means to give up the ghost. This idea was practically commenced, but not carried out. Balfe, who was exceedingly sanguine when he first heard of the subject, quailed eventually in his enthusiasm, and so ended the grand sea-side opera. While I was remaining at Brighton, during an epistolatory correspondence with Reeves on this subject, I wrote him a burlesque note in rhyme, in the style of the Corsican Brothers, to ask to speak to him, and let me know at what hour. Reeves returned me an answer in the same style, still in the Zamiel way, written in *blue* ink, in poetry of his own composing, something like—

When the blue moon shines bright and pretty,
Meet me, Fitzy, on the jetty.

I regret, exceedingly, that I have not the whole of this original effusion of Reeves'

poetical genius, for the gratification of my, I hope, numerous readers. It would have much amazed and amused them, especially the gentler sex. A very droll circumstance came out of it. I had to meet a lady whom I had promised to escort to the botanical exhibition at the Pavilion, when, lo! and behold, I had lost a note containing her address. Everywhere I searched in vain, so did Mrs. Feast, my kind landlady, but fruitlessly. I was much distressed; however, I luckily found the lady, and with all chivalry attended her to the *fête* of flowers. Some weeks after this I received in London a letter, per post, from my landlady at Brighton, who rejoiced, she said, at having found behind the drawers the lost note, about which I appeared so very anxious, and had immediately sent it to relieve my mind. This note, supposed by Mrs. F. to be from the lady in question, written in blue, true emblem of fidelity, was no other than the inspiration of my friend Sims Reeves—

When the blue moon shines bright and pretty,
Meet me, Fitzy, on the jetty, &c., &c.

It was at Brighton that I first had the
very great satisfaction of hearing

Miss Fanny Kemble

read Shakspeare. "The Winter's Tale" was the subject. Mrs. Hughes, the wife of one of the proprietors of Vauxhall when I was engaged there: a lady of great classic taste and refinement, and, I am proud to boast, a most kind friend of mine, was going to the rooms by herself. I wished to attend her, and as we poets, everybody knows, are not celebrated for possessing too much of the essential oil of gold, I promised to write to Miss Kemble for an admission. Mrs. Hughes shook her head doubtfully. "I'm afraid," she said, "you stand but an indifferent chance of a reply. Miss Kemble, I am told, is constantly so much occupied as scarcely to find time to write even to members of her own family." Still I hazarded the note. No answer came. I almost think I had a little bet with Mrs. Hughes. Was it a pair of white

kid gloves? Another day—and another; no note. The day of the performance, the rain descending in torrents—rap, tap, tap, at the door. An especial messenger from Miss Kemble with the admission, and a *letter*—oh, such a delightful letter! Such recognition!—wasn't I proud? Didn't I forget the rain and flourish off in a fly, quite as expensive as the admission would have been, and didn't I call for the lady, flourish my letter about like a bank note of large amount, and read it to the admiration and surprise of my friends, who were as pleased as myself?—and wasn't I the winner of the white kid gloves?

But the reading: how exquisite! how sublimely accented! I never, till then, believed the human mind, or human voice, capable of so much expression, much more of representing a whole play, character after character, better than ever I had seen them on the stage. Miss Kemble requested I would attend every performance; need I say I did so, and every time with new gratification. The very recollection of it turns

back my heart, and the homage of my whole mind to that gifted family, at whose pure shrine I always did and always shall offer up the unalloyed incense of devoted admiration. The love of genius, the respect of talent, is to me as natural an impulse as a sacred prayer, in contemplating the works of the Omnipotent. And I often marvel how men, of genius themselves, can so often and so heartlessly, with that most fatal of weapons in pitiless hands, the pen, with a single stroke crush the aspiring merit which contains even *one* redeeming colour.

During a recent stay on the coast, I happened one morning to go boating with my son-in-law,* but coming to a lock, which opens into the sea near Southwick, he proposed pulling into the open sea. This treat, however, I declined; suffering always *fearfully* from that horrible malady, sea sickness. I, therefore, went ashore to take a stroll through the country, while he continued his excursion on the waves. Coming to Southwick Green, and seeing at some

* Captain Morgan.

small distance a little rustic village church, I repaired towards it. I like to stroll into a country churchyard, where the old forefathers of the hamlet sleep. It brings back to my mind, all the soothing influence inspired by Grey's immortal Elegy in a Country Churchyard. Accordingly, I stepped over the green, through the little swing gate by the ivied porch, there intending to read some of the quaint epitaphs generally displayed. I came immediately in contact with a remarkable, antique, cross-like tomb. The words were not easy to decypher; but the name of Young struck me. Could it be possible? It was possible! There, in this unpretending solitude, after life's fitful fever, slept well the gifted

Charles Young.

The Hamlet, the Othello, the Macbeth!
The Frantic Lover, the Jealous Husband, the ambitious Thane; all compressed beneath a clod of earth! a few wild flowers, and a silent spot! Hush, memory! Tears be still! Speak heart!

L I N E S

At the tomb of Charles Young, in Southwick Churchyard.

Where yonder ancient ivy weeps,
 'Neath the green turf *an actor* sleeps,—
 A little cross, with daisies hung,
 Points the last scene of poor Charles Young.
 O! lovely is the spot! and fair—
 Worthy the ashes slumbering there:—
 So hallowed, ev'ry object round,
 It might be deemed enchanted ground:
 Here, cottage-children lightly tread,
 Unconscious of the mighty dead
 Sleeping beneath. There, peaceful sheep,
 Thro' velvet meadows, softly creep;
 While, sweetly from the downy dell,
 Rings, tinkling up, the wether-bell,
 Mingling its wild, clear melody,
 With the faint sea-waves' distant sigh,
 You'd think Heav'n's silver bells were ringing,
 And angels sighed while they were singing.
 Still, memo'y will call back the day,
 When that cold form was more than clay,
 And conjure up the majesty
 Of Denmark's faded dignity—
 The "air-drawn dagger" too, *his look*
Made visible.—As in a book,
 When base Iago's fell intent,
 Like Etna sheath'd in adamant,
 You read, in those deep darkning eyes,
 What the chill'd heart scarce dar'd surmise.
 These are the glories of the art
 Which "come like shadows, so depart;"
 These were *his* glories, such as now,
 Wreath not their gold round ev'ry brow
 After life's fever, he sleeps well,
 A better harp may, some day, tell

His better story ; where his tomb,
Is known to few : in summer's bloom,
Green is the path : a village church,
To Sabbath chimes, unlocks its porch ;
Go Pilgrim, e'er from fashion's throng, !
Go, wander there
And breathe a pray'r,
For the *great* actor, and GOOD man, CHARLES YOUNG.
New-year's Day, 1158.

From Charle Young, let us turn, wipe
away a starting tear, and proceed to
another Charles —

Charles Dillon.

I seem to have pertained to the age of
the Charles's ; Charles Young, Charles
Kemble, Charles Kean, Charles Mathews,
and Charles Dillon. I was one day pro-
ceeding towards the Chain Pier, (Brighton)
when suddenly I encountered a very valuable
and *sincere* old friend of mine, Mr Con-
quest, manager and proprietor of the Eagle
Theatre, (the Grecian) London, who in-
formed me, that a Mr. Charles Dillon, his
son-in-law, a capital actor, had taken the
Lyceum Theatre, and, if I had anything
on hand, he would do it every justice. I en-
quired what sort of an actor he was. “ In

Jim Wallack's line" was the reply. I thought of my comedy at the Haymarket, told Conquest, and promised to send for, and forward it to Mr. Dillon. This was immediately done; I wrote to Mr. Buckstone, who despatched, not my own M.S., but the copy made out for representation in his theatre in the Haymarket, at the time of poor Mrs. Fitzwilliam's death. Sides marked, designs of scenes, with a variety of ideas and suggestions drawn and written in by Buckstone himself. One alteration was to me most affecting; the name of Fanny in the piece (Mrs. Fitzwilliam's name) was crossed out by Mr. Buckstone, and that of "Lucy" substituted. This little circumstance, so touching, if I had required any conviction of the author's truthfulness, would have amply supplied it; and might here be set down as a beautiful illustration of one of those high points of feeling, which thrill through the heart at once, and leave a more lasting impression than a whole volume of the finest sentiment. Mr.

Dillon, who was at Manchester, I believe, wrote me word that he liked the comedy exceedingly; that, if we could only come to terms, it was a settled point, and he would bring it out in a manner to satisfy my most sanguine wishes. Terms were speedily agreed upon, and when Dillon came to town, the theatre fairly opened, himself playing Belphegor. The "Widow's Wedding," was read in the green-room excellently by himself, before, at least, forty persons, ladies and gentlemen, and received with the greatest approval; Mr. Toole, one of our very best comic actors, who was cast for the part written for Mr. Buckstone, an entire stranger to me, expressing his perfect satisfaction: not that, as I have already shown, the opinions of actors are infallible. Graham, the musical professor, related to me a circumstance respecting Tom Dibdin. Tom, having written a new comedy, invited the performers to hear it read at his cottage, at Hounslow. The good wine and viands, and the fine bracing air gave such a zest to

the favourable opinions, that the comedy was pronounced sparkling, they meant the champagne, for at night, when the public, who had perhaps not any champagne during the day, came to judge, the comedy was pronounced dull as ditch water, and at the end of the second act, unequivocally d——d; in fact, a regular robbery from Molière, to which poor Tom, in his facetious way, observed that it was an unjust condemnation, for Molière never crossed Hounslow Heath in his life, but he supposed, living there himself, they must make out that he had committed a robbery in the dark, on *somebody*.

Now came an under current of differences; the part of Fanny, written for Mrs. Fitzwilliam, having been selected for Mrs. Dillon's own representation, led to a dispute with another lady engaged for that line of business. This caused a great misunderstanding, far from my comprehension. The lady in question, quitted the theatre; and, all of a sudden, although the comedy was underlined for

speedy representation, the rehearsals were suspended, and the season with "Conrad and Medora," the only successful piece that I recollect, came to a close. A fairy palace in this scene, after the style of William Beverley, painted by Fenton, fairly astounded the public. The next season, the "Widow's Wedding," was again announced with a great acquisition in its behalf, inasmuch as (Mrs. Mellon) Miss Woolgar, who did more than justice to every part she undertook, was deputed to play the principal character—the Widow—notwithstanding which, the banns published, the licence, as I was assured, absolutely purchased, there seemed to want nothing but a *ring* (up,) when it came to pass, they had somehow, nobody knew how, *lost* one of the acts. I had no copy. Before I could have supplied one from memory, Dillon, who had not anything like so good a season as the last, would have become as he did, a failing manager.*

* Honourable mention should here be made of Marston's "Life, Ransom."

From the little I saw of Dillon, as an actor, I considered him a rough diamond ; his Belphegor, in a melodrame of that title, his crack part, was excellent ; his Shakespeare's characters all too vociferous, a fault easily amended. He was *the* best in " Claude Melnotte ;" his very own wrought colouring gave a truthfulness, not meditated by the artist, to the gardener's son. His performance in the " Three Musqueteers," was exceedingly original, and a very happy conception. His handsome wife, also, was very clever in parts of feeling, especially, and high melodramatic characters—in the wife of " Belphegor," for instance ; but as I never saw her act anything droll, except in burlesque, which is *unnatural*, I cannot at all imagine what she would have done with Mrs. Fitzwilliam's part of Fanny, to which she did me the honour to take such a liking. I can only regret that I did not see her perform it. As a manager, Mr. Dillon appeared to me too good-natured and relying, thinking with the *thoughts* of *others*, rather

than with those God had given him for his own especial use. He has returned to the platitute, where he is a welcome *star*; heartily glad, I should say, to be rid of the *yoke* of a London theatre, which, however, it may rhyme with *joke*, is a much more serious one than many, and clever people, too, imagine, till they try to pass it off as their own. I once saw a country manager, who had just taken Drury Lane, when a theatrical friend called on him from the country, to congratulate him on becoming lessee, get up into his chair and crow, exceedingly like a cock. In a few weeks after, I saw him in the same chair, bent down with repentance, weeping like a child. Be happy, you country managers that float in schooners under shadow of the land, laugh in your sleeves when the wind blows strongly, and the loud thunder beats like an earthquake against the exposed ribs of the mid-waved London Leviathans. And you, young authors, that would write for the stage, see here the history of an old experienced

author's comedy, and what you may prepare your minds to expect in your turn. You that could not be what you are, were you not endowed with fine feelings, and a polished taste, far from the just respect, perhaps the comprehension, of those whom your superior talent sustains.* I must add here, that I never yet saw *any actor*, however talented, *make a bad play a good one* ! nor even a speech tell which had not in it the true essence of genius, no matter whether tragic or comic. The philosophy of some managers as regards us poor authors is occasionally quite stoical, not unlike King Charles's beef-eater. A disappointed author, in the time of Charles II., repaired to the water in the

* The Divine proverb says, if a man smite you on the right cheek, offer him the left ; but the Italian proverb has it—

Chi troppo pecora si fa il Lupo sel mangia.

There is a silver thread to be drawn between these two, of which I have invariably availed *myself* ; and after the production of upwards a hundred dramas, in *all sorts* of theatres, I recollect but few instances of disrespect ; and fewer still, which did not terminate in regret on the offending side, and credit on mine.

park to drown himself, but finding the water too chilly to be comfortable, he sprang out and hanged himself on an adjoining tree. One of the Beefeaters who was sitting near the spot, feeding the king's ducks, quietly observed all this, and, on being reproved for allowing it to take place, "How the deuce could I understand such a manœuvre!" said he, "I naturally came to the conclusion, as he went into the water to *wash* himself, that he merely hung himself on the tree to *dry*."

Mrs. Charles Dillon

was not only a pretty actress, but a very pretty dancer, of the Duverney school. I have frequently reflected, as I sat to witness those graceful movements, the poetry of action, on the vast change come over dancing in this country, little less surprising than railways compared to high roads: especially extraordinary when I tell you of a circumstance related to me by an old gentleman, of a *delightful* Mrs. Wyebrow, in the time of George III., who, as the per-

fection of a danseuse, fascinated every heart by loudly keeping time with her *high-heeled* shoes to the tune in the orchestra. In such characters as Medora and Lalla Rookh, Mrs. C. Dillon realised the poet's romantic dream, and recalled forcibly to the old stager the days when the Peri-like Miss Foote, afterwards Countess of Harrington, was the bright refulgence in Farley's "Vision of the Sun," or that enchantress, Miss Farebrother, in some of her romantic parts.

Mr. Creswick

Having, some time ago, had a great desire to write a part for this gentleman, now one of, if not our most finished tragic actor on the stage, though sadly lost sight of at the Surrey, however much there appreciated, of which theatre, in conjunction with Mr. Sheppard, he is lessee, I hit upon a Welch story, called the

Children of the Castle.

I took the greatest pains, wishing, if possible, to please the popular actor, to enlist

him in my cause, and thrust him as a new arrow into my shield. But, from some motive or other, unluckily for me, he would not be converted into an arrow to make a hit for me, nor enlist to play the hero of my new drama. I believe at the time I presented my M.S., he had another and a more classic part in his august mind. I had not taken him at the ebb which leads on to fortune. Like the startled deer, I fly from a M.S. when it has once been stricken by the slightest barb of rejection, although it not unfrequently happens that the deer, cured by Doctor Time of his wound, becomes the strongest in the flock.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Holt,
having taken the Marylebone Theatre, I heard a good account of them, and therefore went over to witness their performance. The Marylebone is one of the most difficult theatres in or near London into which to drag an audience. I knew that but too well, consequently was not surprised when I saw a very indifferent house; but I *was*

surprised when I saw two such *really good actors*. Mr. Clarence Holt heard that I was in the house, and with great politeness sent me his compliments, saying he should much like to speak to me. I excused myself that night, being unusually late, but having to go into the neighbourhood next morning, called to return my compliments in exchange for his of the foregoing evening. I found him a very sensible man, exceedingly enthusiastic in his profession. He had recently returned from Australia, or California, I forget which, where with his own exertions as an actor, and those of his talented wife, he had made a considerable sum of money. His desire was to have appeared at Drury Lane, or the Haymarket; but as no opening could be gained, at either of those theatres, he had, unluckily for himself, taken the Marylebone, the least understandable of theatres to a stranger, where his merits, and those of his wife, with their money, were almost entirely thrown away. Even Mrs. Warner, who became at one

time lessee of this theatre, did not attract, although the Keeleys, at a more suitable time, met with great success. Mr. Douglas made it answer still better. Mr. Holt requested to know if I had a new drama, as he wished to try the effect of originality on the denizens of Portman Market. I recollected the "Children of the Castle," and thought the subject might please them--especially the children. He liked the idea. I read him the piece, which was at once cheerfully accepted, and produced under the able stage directorship of Mr. Neville, exceedingly well acted, and as well received. At the end of every act the manager and manageress were called before the public, as were their two clever little daughters, who played the children. Mr. Holt's fine, melodious voice told admirably, especially in the speeches of tenderness and feeling, and being a young, active man, with a good figure, the dramatic portion, also, could not have been better done. Mrs. Holt was a good actress.

Some of the papers did her the honor to liken her to Ristori. Nothing could have gone better or more triumphantly than this drama ; yet, in a very few nights, the audiences fell back into their original level, and after the run of his Christmas pantomime, Mr. Holt quitted a theatre, where nothing will do but unceasing variety, and that of a very peculiar description. This understood, a fortune might be made even at the Marylebone. It seems to me that people go there to be startled up by explosions. It was Maggioni, the Italian poet, who related to me the story of some old Milanese nobleman, who usually repaired to the theatre, to take a comfortable *siesta*. He lulled himself, or rather was lulled to sleep by the soft strains of the overture. After some time, waking up, if the performance was a comedy, he enquired whether the lovers had got married ; if they had not, he went to sleep again ; if tragedy, he demanded whether they were killed ; if that sad catastrophe had taken place, he put on his hat, and went home to bed.

In the Portman Market stands a chapel or church, built originally for a legitimate theatre, what an idea ! why not have chosen Salisbury Plain as more salubrious to legitimacy ? I was retained to write the opening piece, but this house of prayer was never devoted to a den of ————, I must not implicate, either *myself*, or *the profession*. I had written a melodrame at the Marylebone, formerly for Mr. Smith, “Hans Von Steine,” which ran upwards of forty nights ; Wild, Mr. H. Frazer, Miss Le Brun, and Miss Fanny Williams played in it. Yet that piece was scarcely ever represented in any *other* theatre, a circumstance alone shewing the peculiar taste of this peculiar audience. Yet strange and contradictory to add, no audience ever more appreciated language than *they* did that of the “Children of the Castle,” so admirably interpreted by Mr. and Mrs. Holt, such, for instance, as the following :—

Lord William : Oh ! what a sweet, a magic word is *rest* !
 The pillow'd head—the heart that sleeps in quiet,
 Locking out sorrow with a golden key—

Till even thro' the keyhole, prying care
Cannot peep in.

Again—

Lady Mabel : Wife to *thee* ! rather I'd crawl the earth,
Begging my scanty bread from door to door,
Steep'd in mine own tears : sleep at night,
In the dark forest, by the famish'd wolf
Rather than by thy side ; thou demon !
Coming to woo me with thy gory hands,
Stained with my children's blood.

These speeches were received with acclamations.

But as there seems to me to be a of sort hiatus in the narrative here, my river becoming rather weedy, to prevent my readers falling asleep, I shall just seize this opportunity to relate, as we row on, an original anecdote or two, of

The Elder Mathews.

Being one time at Boulogne, at the hotel which leads from the sea to the lower town, instead of the unclouded blue sky of *La belle France*, we had nothing but a sky as dark and dingy as Erebus, and an unceasing rain, which promised no abatement. One morning, while the marble-sized rain-drops of the unmitigating shower were battering

against every window like a pelting discharge of artillery, and the desponding *garçons* swinging their white napkins to and fro, as if they were waiting to be strangled in them, Mathews created such an excitement as caused the pitiless rain to be forgotten. If old Lear had met with a similar one, he would have forgotten his memorable malediction. The shrill cry of a half-suffocated infant was suddenly heard in the room, or rather sort of bar, in which sat the landlady, with a bunch of flowers mounted on her *tête*, as high as a church steeple. The lady looked perfectly astounded at this unexpected sound, which the mimic, apparently busy writing a letter, affected not to hear; she lifted up the gaudy tablecloth, from under which the sound evidently proceeded; the scream was then repeated in an adjoining drawer; the lady turned pale as death, she hurriedly rang the bell, and in rushed chamber-maids, and *garçons* without end, all searching *pour l'enfant*, which now squeaked in every drawer and closet alternately. Every-

body was consternated, the ventriloquist, (Mathews,) pretending to be as consternated as the rest. At length the sound took quite a different turn, it was that of a drowning puppy, in a cask of *eau-de-vie*; at this, the still more affrighted mistress of the establishment looked more aghast; her ugly French poodle, for which Mathews had a particular aversion, had suddenly disappeared. The fact was, while everybody's back was turned, Mathews had slipped it into a box.

"Oh, mon Dieu! mon Dieu! Mons. Mathew," screamed the excited lady, "dere is leetle beautiful Bijean, just as I was make for him jacket and pair of pantoufle, gone and drown himself, on account of de nasty rain, in de *eau-de-vie*, and will not come out of de bung-hole, though I call him eber so sweet, and hold him de lump of sugar. Bijean! Bijean! Bijean." She was just on the point of having the barrel staved, without a moment reflecting how the poodle could possibly have got inside, when the dog, set loose by Mathews, like Jack,

jumped out of the box, to the uncomprehending astonishment, if not consternation, of everybody ; and what was singular, the rain *suddenly* subsided, which they attributed as much to Mr. Mathews's conjurations, as the mysterious reappearance of the landlady's pet poodle.

On another occasion, when Mathews was a very young man, in the Yorkshire circuit, with Tate Wilkinson, having hired a horse to proceed to Wakefield, (I believe,) after riding some ten or twelve miles, he bethought himself of putting up at a little roadside inn for the purpose of getting his dinner. Having first conscientiously ordered half a peck of oats and beans for his Rozinante, he took a turn, while the bacon and eggs were frying, into a neighbouring churchyard to read the scraps of original poetry on the gravestones : he had a great passion for gravestones, monuments, and, indeed, antiquities of all sorts. On coming back to the public house, he bethought him to look into the stable to see how his horse was going on, and was not a little surprised

to find that he had already cleared the manger of both beans and oats, although his grinders were evidently none of the best. "Your beans must have been boiled, or unusually soft," observed the facetious mimic to a carrotty-headed elderly fellow of a hostler, called the *lad*, who stood four feet three in his never-cleaned hobnails, rubbing up a rusty pair of bits with a whisp of hay.

"Did you say *soft*, Muster?" enquired the astonished hobnails.

"Yes! either your beans must have been *soft*, or you think I am, if you imagine I am to believe that the horse has eaten the oats and beans in so short a time."

The *old* boy turned quite round, and looking, with the impudence of low cunning, into Mathews's face, observed, with as fine a piece of acting as he himself could have assumed, peeping, at the same time, askance into the manger, "Well, blow me if he aint gone an' bolted them *banes*, *woats* an' all."

“ I don't believe he's had any given him to *bolt*,” said Mathews, coolly.

Hobnail put on a hurt look, “ What do you take us for ?” enquired he. “ Why I goven'm *meself*, woats au' all, an' a matter o' half a quarter over ; the hungry baste !”

“ Now,” continued Mathews, “ you know that to be a downright falsehood ”

“ A falsehood ?” putting on a bullying air.

“ Yes, a falsehood ! However, I'll ask the horse.”

“ Axt the hos ?”

“ Yes, axt the hos !” then, turning to the manger, “ Jack !” he enquired, “ have you had your banes and woats ?”

“ Noa, I'm d——d if I have ; the “ rogue han't gove me none,” was the unanswerable reply.

Hobnail turned pale as a sheet, roared out lustily, and, in attempting to enter the house, fell down on a dunghill in a fit, to which, as he was subject, it seemed ; the landlord, who came out, merely threw a

bucket of water over him, and left him to recover by himself. Desiring the landlord to administer the oats and beans to the horse, which he did at once, Mathews now repaired into the hostelry, finished a hearty dinner, and taking a glass with his jolly host, ordered his horse, to proceed on his journey.

Poor Hobnail, who by this time had recovered his senses, and told such wonderful stories about the *speaking* horse; every individual in the village was at the door to witness the traveller's departure. Mounted, Mathews offered the usual twopence to Hobnail, but the fellow, slinking back, said, "Noa, noa, I arn't to be cotched that ere way!" no doubt mistaking Mathews for the great master of all evil. At this, Mathews exclaimed to the horse, "Jack, have you had your woats?"

"Yes," was the reply, and before the whole party had regained anything like self, Mathews had set spurs to Jack, and disappeared, as they all said, *nobody knowed how*.

My nephew, a young gentleman of considerable abilities, Mr. Henry Watkinson, editor and proprietor of a leading country journal, coming to see me a little previously to this period, while I was writing a note, amused himself by reading a little poem which I had inadvertently written from observation, in the street where I lived, called

*The House to Let,**

was so much struck with the story, as to enquire what I was going to do with it! I had no idea, nor why I wrote it. Of all things on earth, poetry is the most unpayable. He requested to print it in his journal; he did so, and from which it was transferred into so many papers, that, eventually, he published it in the form of a volume, with a number of other stray pieces, dedicated to my sincere and excellent friend, Sir William de Bathé. I speak with great pride of this work, the more especially because it was a little out of my way, not being in the least dramatic. I received

* Translated into French by Le Chevalier de Chatelain—into Italian by Maggioni.

many good words, too, from the editors, especially the *Musical World*, and the *Court Circular*—such good words as, kindly as, from time to time, I had been spoken of, I never received before. But this was not all—a *much* higher honour awaited me :

HER MAJESTY,

from an advertisement announcing the publication of the work, was most graciously pleased to send an express messenger from Buckingham Palace to my house to purchase the first copy. This just proves the truth of the assertion that Her Gracious Majesty never loses sight of the *humblest* talent in her kingdom, and is the very *first* herself to tender it her support and patronage.

Miss Nightingale, also, sent me a letter of commendation on that poem. *The* Miss Nightingale of the Crimea, whose approval might sanctify any work, no matter what.

This brings me to 1858. A letter from my *auld* acquaintance, Henry Phillips, the popular tenor, reminding me of a little

operetta, "Auld Robin Gray," which I had written for the music of Alexander Lee, nearly twenty years previously—a piece accepted by Mr. Macready, during his lesseeship of Drury Lane, underlined, but never produced, on account of the protracted indisposition of Mrs. Waylet, who was to have represented Jenny, the comic parts intended for Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, Mrs. Keeley being a beautiful ballad singer—is still so, no doubt—Auld Robin Gray, especially for Phillips himself. It was with the utmost difficulty, (Lee being dead,) that some of the music, could be found. "Blow, ye gentle gales," and the "Beautiful Smile of the Auld Man's Wife," however, were restored, through the exertions of T. Mackinlay, Esq., of the firm of Goulding and D'Almaine—that firm having paid an immense sum for the copyright in the composer's lifetime. Mr. Phillips felt a great desire still to produce this operetta on the stage, therefore entered into an agreement with Mr. Sheppard,

of the Surrey, to represent it at his theatre. Sheppard, who is a very enthusiastic and candid manager, wrote to me on the subject without the slightest affectation, expressing his approval, agreed cheerfully to my conditions, and accordingly

Auld Robin Gray,

the cause of so many gentle tears, through lang years past from lovely eyes for the unhappy fate of puir Jenny, made his, I believe by no means first, appearance, in other forms, on the stage at the Surrey Theatre, in 1858, and was most kindly welcomed. Mrs. F. Grosvenor, formerly Miss Fanny Healy, of the "Siege of Rochelle" celebrity, was Jenny, and sang the ballads sweetly, especially the "Sweet Burn Side." Phillips *was* Auld Robin himself. And here, again, how much was I indebted to my friend Widdicombe, who, as a Doctor's Boy, put his master's prescriptions into the fire, and administered others of his own, mysteriously compounded—chloroform for senna—to the unhappy patients. Every-

thing he said and did, aided by that clever little actress, Miss E Johnstone, set the house in roars of laughter, and contributed *immensely* to the success of the operetta. With this drama, nearly everything I had ever written for the stage had been produced, which is very remarkable when you come to consider how difficult it is even to get a play read, much more accepted, by the sometimes over-fastidious managers. The very first melodrama I had acted I simply left at the stage door, like an infant in the turning-box ; it found its way to the manager, and a fortnight after was in full sail. If I could bring myself to believe in destiny, I should certainly say my destiny was to write for the stage. How often, disheartened or *disgusted* have I tried other pursuits, and invariably failing been *compelled* to "turn again Whittington;" with, however, a very different termination to that of the worthy lord mayor of yore : I was the cat that killed the rat, but the gilded crown fell on very different brows. I

should, *perhaps*, have, in a pecuniary sense, done much more wisely to have stuck to the cultivation of wheat or barley, and imitating the immortal Burns, eschewed poetry at the plough tail—*perhaps not*. We have all our various propensities, without knowing why. The lark flies up to sing “at heaven’s gate,” the wagtail twitters in the newly turned-up furrough. It is a marvellous pleasant thing to be able to appreciate; but it is equally delightful to be appreciated for appreciating. Although now, after so long, and not so unsuccessful a course, gladly would I sit quietly under the branches of the yellow-leaved autumn tree. Yet, I fear me, when the golden trumpet of Fame sounded the praise of others, the heart of the battered old gladiator would spring up again, and yearn to participate in the triumph of new victories. The drama is, truly, at a low ebb. She cannot well, in comparison even with her faded magnificence of my early days, and that’s a negative consolation, sink lower. And why? She has not a temple

—a *home* that she can really call her own. There are many *great* dramatic writers ; but, in common parlance, what is the use of a hat, with no head to put it on ? Not that I am going to quarrel with my country—I am too thorough-bred an Englishman for that. But I cannot think that we are a truly dramatic nation, especially when compared with France. One would scarcely believe it possible that the humblest theatre should be open a single night in this vast metropolis without being crowded to the ceiling. Yet how frequently do we witness empty benches to meritorious things ? The insolvency of managers is an every day drama. Even those who contrive to weather the storm, the reader would be amazed to learn how occasionally low their receipts are ; and the classic worshipper of legitimacy might shrink back with horror to learn that more than one modern manager looks as much forward to his Christmas pantomime, as the farmer to his golden harvest, to pay legitimate losses—the blights

and hail storms of the early season. I know that one of our greatest lessees, now retired from the stage, during his management at Drury Lane, brought out a magnificent tragedy, exquisitely acted, by which he lost upwards of two thousand pounds; and this ruinous outpouring was only stopped by the production of a musical piece, in which the effect of the ebbing and flowing of the sea created a vast sensation. A *fine* tragedy, produced under the management of Mr. Macready, at Drury Lane, called "Gissipus," ought not to be overlooked. I for one, draw no inferences of the decline of the drama from the payment to authors in the past days, (authors are cleverer now than they were.) If a man received a thousand pounds for his tragedy, it was because a manager could not, then, slip over to Paris, (we being at that period at war with France,) and for a couple of francs purchase a popular French drama, then steam home to London again, and filter himself through a principal part of his

cheaply acquired purchase, by the aid of borrowed plumes, *alias* the French actor's *costume*. If either Colman, Morton, or any of those popular writers had lived in the present time, they would have stood a very indifferent chance of receiving thousand-pound cheques. Managers had, then, *only* English talent, for which they were compelled to pay, or have no talent at all. I should be glad to learn which of the elder dramatists could have written a better, or half so good a play as the "Hunchback," "Virginius," the "Lady of Lyons," or "Money!" No; the drama, it is true, has declined, but certainly it cannot be on account of the want of merit in its living dramatists, while we boast of Knowles, Bulwer, Serle, Coyne, Planché, Buckstone, Oxenford, Chorley, Simpson, Selby, Bernard, Marston, the Broughs, and a whole phalanx of younger talent, all glittering together like one starry constellation of dramatic genius. We must recollect, also, in the time of Colman, Morton, &c., Drury Lane and Covent

Garden had *their seasons*, at the end of which, the Haymarket *opened for its season*. Minor theatres were almost unknown. It was many years before theatres were allowed in the city; and now we have not only innumerable splendid theatres, but innumerable Cider Cellars, Canterbury Halls, Gin Palaces, Taverns, Casinos, &c., where singing of the best kind, and dancing are displayed, whose charms are doubly accelerated by the charms of bottled stout, brandy and water, &c., &c. The musical listener listens to Handel, and *handles* the stout at the same interval. Our rude forefathers could sob over Mrs. Siddons in tragedy, or be convulsed with laughter at Mrs. Jordan in a farce; but the playgoers of the present day seem to have lost the hearty character of the old English public, and to require either crying or laughing, a bodily stimulant constantly within reach to supply the exhaustion of both mind and body. We always, since the days of Nell Gwynne, had our oranges, to suck, why not since Nelly's time our

ginger beer? but formerly refreshments were modestly disposed of *entre acte*. They say that the "*march of intellect*" increases. I am almost inclined to doubt that: the spread of education increases—that brings intellect to greater perfection. Tenpenny nails are now wrought by steam and machinery a thousand a minute. Wonderful! But it was much more wonderful to reflect that the Temple of the Sun, supposed to have been the finest work since creation, in Palmyra, was built without nails at all, unless we bring into account the nails of the workman's fingers. How, then, shall we balance this simple question with a suitable opinion? to which of the two award the prize of intellect? to the inventors of nails, beneath whose clasping embrasure houses have stood many hundreds of years—or to the erectors of the Temple of the Sun, and various gorgeous palaces, which have stood thousands upon thousands of years, and whose magnificent *ruins* still astonish and *instruct* mankind! What wonderful disclosures towards

the improvement of scientific men might be made if the spirit rappers would only conjure up the ghost of the poor Queen of Palmyra, Zenobia, or some of the master architects of her time. But it does not seem to occur to those superhuman-gifted visionaries to conjure up any *useful* member of the past, who might enlighten us on so remote a retrospect; although I did hear a very intelligent erudite man assert that a tragedy had absolutely been written by an invisibly-guided hand, dictated by the spirit of the old Bard of Avon himself. This play, he said, had all the merit and genius of Shakspeare, but I have never yet heard of its being brought out. I confess that I am somewhat sceptical as regards the wonderful influences ascribed to the mesmeric gift; although, as a droll experiment, I must relate an anecdote which occurred under my own apparent influence. When I resided next door to poor Crevelli, I dined at his house nearly every Sunday, and met at his hospitable table a large company, mostly

Italians: amongst the rest, a professional gentleman of great celebrity, who also invited me to his house, to which, also, I frequently repaired. It seemed however, much of a favourite as I happened to be with the Signor, I was not equally so with the Signora. She said that I talked too much, (ladies liking generally to have that privilege all to themselves) this was not her case, however: she was a very silent lady, and little expected this observation would ever reach my ear. A brother poet, with the kindest intention in the world, gave me the hint; from that moment I stood aloof from the delicately-nerved lady, and in her presence made a rule to remain as silent as circumstances and my naturally open disposition would allow me. This event, ridiculous as it may appear, estranged me a little from the house; till, passing one day, the Signor was standing at his door, and, as usual, most politely invited me to enter. I did so, and to my

surprise and regret, found her silent ladyship, not over silent herself, seated on the sofa, and writhing under the painful inflictions of a swollen face. Accustomed as I have been for years to the illnesses of my wife, I enlist all my warmest sympathies, especially with the sufferings of woman. Habit is, sometimes, even stronger than nature. I inquired of La Signora what application she had made? "Everything, without the *slightest* effect!" was her desponding reply.

Laudanum, leeches, poppyheads, all of no avail. I had heard of mesmerism producing *astonishing* effects. What was mesmerism? Merely passing the tips of the fingers over the part affected! Was it painful? Not at all; on the contrary, said to be assuaging.

And the Signor made a rather awkward attempt at displaying the operation on his wife's face; it produced no effect.

I had visited the Mesmeric Institution:

I had seen the celebrated Mr. Capon mesmerise. It was not exactly after the Signor's manner.

The spasm grew worse. "How was it?" cried the suffering lady, impatiently, in an agony, as if anticipating some relief.

"Have I your permission?" demanded I, of the Caro Sposo.

"Si si! Signor," impatiently.

Immediately I gave the usual passes, and in less than five minutes, as by the touch of magic, the pain was *gone*!

The patient looked gratefully up, and exclaimed with a beautiful smile, for she was *very* beautiful, and with a dulcet voice,—

"I'll never *blame you for too much talking in future.*"

In the course of a few hours, the swelling in her cheek had totally subsided. And the last time I saw the Signor, on enquiring after *my* patient, I found that she had not had even the slightest return of the attack. I was a *mesmerist*! Perhaps, like Theodore Hook, I shall come to see *invisible* stars

next.* This mesmeric influence, as they call it, who believes in it, is said to be another

Theodore Hook.

* One very dark night in November, Theodore Hook had been dining with a few *select* friends, and imbibed a sufficient quantity of wine to somewhat obscure his vision. A facetious friend of his, an Irishman, on their way home, asked him to point out a few planets, and great constellations. Hook entering into the other's vein, looked upwards through the dim obscurity of the night very earnestly, and, after a minute's deliberation, exclaimed, although not a solitary star was visible—"Beautiful! bright as midday! I never saw the *invisible* world so *clear* before. There's Mars; there's Venus; there's —!" and his voice beginning now to be rather husky, his friend led him into his own house, where he was on a visit, and ordered his night-cap, a stiff glass of whiskey punch. Hook rallied as if by magic, and, taking up a pen, wrote the following in promptu.

I saw the *invisible* stars,
So distant, so cold, and so pale,
I scarce could distinguish old Mars,
So far from the Little Bear's tail.

Jupiter, crimson with rage,
Venus all trembling with fear,
Saturn looked worn with old age,
And Juno she dropt a sad tear.

Urania seem'd wan and alas,
Herschel the size of a tester,
Far, far out of sight appear'd Pallas,
Beyond I could scarcely see Vesta.

My vision was clear as noonday,
And that was a great consolation,

proof of the march of intellect. Yet, the Egyptians practised it. In the British Museum you will see numerous instances illustrative of this, with the patient seated, and the mesmeriser standing before him exercising his influence. Verifying the old axiom of our forefathers—Nothing new under the sun.

For I saw, as you Irishmen say,
Taurus Bull, a bright consthellation.

The Great Bear, too, appeared like an ox,
Gazing down on the sprightly young Ram,
Who look'd up to Castor and Pollux,
As neither a *mister* or *mam*.

Far below the horizon was Crab,
Not the poet, no that I must say,
Nor Shelley, the author of *Mab*,
Who took flight in the Milky Way.

Virgo look'd more like a man,
Whilst Leo resembled a virgin,
Indeed, I mistook them for Pan,
Though more like a fish call'd a sturgeon.

Pisces seem'd very odd fish,
Whence Libra was picking the *scales*,
And Lyra the sight seem'd to relish,
Whilst Aquarius stood near with his pails.

Capricornus of course was a goat,
Which Sagittarius shot in a bluster ;
Pole Star, without breeches or coat,
Kick'd the Pleiades into a *cluster*.

It seems to me now, that my songs, with their quiet weight, and my various operas, with their numerous glees, trios, ballads, &c., have done my reputation intrinsically more real good than even my plays and melodramatic works, numerous as they are, and that good, strengthening, not declining with the progress of time. For this, I feel that I ought to share the reputation with my numerous composers, whose names I here gratefully and proudly record, and sincerely acknowledge.

Balfe, Vincent Wallace, Rodwell, Loder, H. Smart, Barnett, Blewitt, Ferdinand, Riess, Henry Laurent, Walter Maynard, Tully, M'Carroll, Nelson, Westrop, Henry Phillips, Montgomery, Alexander Lee, Hatton, Glover, Smith, E. Land, Macfarren, and Sir Henry Bishop. To these are to be added, numerous pieces adapted to the music of Meyerbeer, Rossini, Mozart, Donizetti, &c., &c. Many of my operas have been translated, both into German and

Italian, and performed in those languages ;
and that exquisite French poet .

Le Chevalier de Chatelain,

Has done me the honour to translate my
“ Fairy and the Flowers,” and the “ House
to Let,” most elegantly, and with great
purity, into his native language. Every-
one of these talented names seems to record
my claim to the success awarded me by the
public, by qualifying that to which each
individual name is attached, to my lyric
productions especially, as the signature
to a bank note, giving it nearly, if not
entirely, its intrinsic worth. I forgot to
mention in the course of these pages, an
opera, produced at the Surrey, called

The Forest Maiden.

The music by Tully, in which Miss Rains-
forth, Miss Rebecca Isaacs, Mr. Borani,
and Mr. William Harrison, performed with
the utmost approval. The story laid in the
reign of Queen Mary, was very interesting ;
and the music sweet and natural.

Miss Rainsforth,

the most modest and lady-like singer and actress (a real model for the imitation of others of her sex,) on the stage, rendered her part Alice Copley in this agreeable opera, very interesting, by the perfection which she gave both to the music and language. Nor was pretty little Rebecca Isaacs less entitled to the approval which she drew down from the audience, and the tears, too, which she excited in the pathetic ballad of the Moorish Page—

Like the lilly
In the valley, &c.

lines in imitation of some of those older madrigals and ballads, so patiently and tastefully collected from the mouldering leaves of sylvan ages, by my excellent literary friend, William Chapel, Esq., in his learned volumes of *Ancient Songs and Ballads of the Olden Times*. A work replete with interest to the poet and the antiquarian.

It has been my good fortune to bring before the operatic public, first on the stage, our very best composers, Balfe, and Wallace,

and also Henry Laurent and Henry Smart. Henry Laurent in his grand opera of

Quentin Durnard,

at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, where, although the theatre was exceedingly out of odour at the time, it met with decided success; the part of Quentin, by Mr. William Harrison. The opera, or rather operetta of Mr. Henry Smart, "Berta," was produced at the Haymarket. Mr. and Mrs. Sims Reeves, Wiess, Manvers, William Farren, &c., playing the various parts. Music is by no means in its ascendent at this theatre; the book, too, was not ponderous enough for the weight of the composer's work, consequently this opera, excellent and appreciated as it really was, aided also by the finest scenery, by Mr. Calcott, as well as the finest singing, by Reeves, failed of attraction, simply because the public do not seek music at this house. In his next attempt to do himself anything like justice, Mr. Smart must adopt a *more important* subject in a *much larger* theatre.

As regards the operas of which I have written the books, I again ascribe little merit to myself, I am both willing and anxious to award *all* the popularity they may have acquired to their various composers. I must still infer, however, that I know of no truly successful opera which is not sustained by a really dramatic and interesting libretto. "The Siege of Rochelle," was almost *my* first attempt of the kind, and the "Siege of Rochelle" was next akin to a translation. My principal credit, in those early days of concerted music being the *larding up* of abstruse passages with stage effects, to render them digestible to unsophisticated listeners, without which I *still* question if the beautiful finale, excellent as it is, to Balfe's first opera, would have gone quite so smoothly down, or have been so long remembered by the public. Another fine opera, since produced, with a much finer finale, unassisted by similar effects, failed, being only represented a few solitary nights, and is now forgotten, at all events by the million. The

people, during twenty years, especially since the works of Meyerbeer, have become wonderfully astute to music of the deepest dye, although I think even that great and judicious master by no means spurns the *light* of other days, to assist his chromatic passages ; “ Robert the Devil,” for instance. My old colleague Balfe, has of late years, I feel, turned somewhat of an apostate from the early faith between us two ; but the world and the world's doings, in order to keep pace with prosperity, and the changing peals of time, leave little space in business transactions for individual appreciation or partiality as is fully, by his recent success, borne out ; neither am I so sanguine in such matters as I was wont. I have written, however, *two* works for Vincent Wallace, already purchased, which I anxiously wish to see produced ; they are splendid efforts of fine musical conception and composition. I predict for them a great, a grand career. Henri Laurent has also an opera accepted by Mr. Smith at Drury Lane, of the merits

of which the first great musical judges speak *highly*. Singers of the first repute are hovering far and wide, picking up, no doubt, the golden grain in every quarter, Sims Reeves, Weiss, E. Gæler, Haigh Drayton, Victoire Balfe, Jenny Baur, Mademoiselle Vaneri, Madame Weiss, and Madame Anna Bishop. I trust the day is not far remote when we shall again hear every one of these resplendent nightingales, like harbingers of a new operatic spring, all warbling in their own atmosphere,—London.

It may be in these pages that I have omitted many names to which I wish to throw the myrtle. Young aspirants whose blossoms in the olden times would have been so beautifully trailed up ; but in the various works whereon I have been and am occupied, (a new novel for instance, in three volumes, “The Gipsy Wedding,” already in the press,) my memory is a little overcharged, and if I have anywhere repeated a twice-told tale, as is not altogether

unlikely, I must stand excused, as I hope I shall, for my forgetfulness.

Apropos still of blue fire, of which I have been *accused* of being the inventor,—if poor Clara Webster had simply danced before this theatrical *ignis fatui*, which sets fire to *nothing*, (in the “Revolt of the Harem”) she would not have been burnt to death almost before the audience by her light dress attracting the gas, but probably have been still living, and still a young woman. The merits of this fine scientific chemical preparation, at which the ignorant smile, are not simply applied to effects on the stage, but are used in the greatest emergencies, as signals at sea, especially during fogs, and have saved not only many valuable lives, but many vessels from destruction. Blue-fire is a discovery well qualified in the pages of humanity.

The story of Scazziani has no novelty to recommend it, a tale of the kind being to be found in the French and in the Arabian Nights. Douglas Jerrold, also, seems to

have had an idea of it in his "Rent Day." This version, however, is the *original*, I believe, although never before in print.

Those fine old leaves of the drama, Charles Kemble, Bishop, Osbaldiston, Bartley, Wilde, Harley, Rodwell, and Douglas Jerrold, have dropped one after the other from the tree of life. Of the three latter, though supposed to be all affluent men, report ascribes to their latter fortunes a sad reverse. Rodwell told me at one period that he was worth thirty thousand pounds. But merit, poetical and histrionic, seems to hold little account with life assurance offices, as if the muses spurned from their fairy court the selfish sordidness of golden Mammon, within whose dazzling circle the children of the world delight so much to warm, and not unfrequently do singe their motley wings, which seems somehow to have been the case with one or two of my old friends above, to whose good memories, however, it is mine to throw the wreath which *never fades*, and which gold, with all its imaginary

and mistaken value, could never purchase the well-earned coronal of gifted, almost self-taught men—nature's pupils:—for, be it understood, learning, (not even the deepest erudition of Cambridge or Oxford) supplies no particle of wit or genius, they are the emanations of God alone, and are therefore entitled, even in their rudest shape, to a reverence and a veneration akin to sanctity, which education should teach us religiously to observe as it does our prayers.

I remarked a few pages back, that nothing new remained under the sun. I am now about in some degree, in my own person, to contradict that long-established assertion, by a lame attempt at something new myself, by placing *my preface*, as it were, at the end of my work, instead of the commencement; simply for this reason: mine is an unusual preface which dips its extremities at one end into the waves of the past, and at the other, into the flowing on of the future, a garland of wild flowers flung carelessly enough into the stream, and

held back by a briar, from which, when I am gone, some kind and abler hand may set it free to float to its eventual termination. I allude to a *succeeding volume*, which may carry on this narrative hereafter to its close, when its original writer has reached that mysterious bourne, from which no traveller returns.

In composing this book, it was my first intention to have written it as a fiction, naming myself by some other appellation, after the manner of John Halifax, simply to have escaped an apparent egotism, in being always compelled to speak of myself—I—I—I unceasingly. This intention, however, has been overruled, on the plea that I must then have given fictitious names to my plays also, which would have produced, if not a ridiculous, a less truthful colour, and have seemed more like affectation. It is not pleasant to a sensitive mind to be constantly recurring to the first personal pronoun ; but, in a narrative of facts, it cannot be avoided. The reader, therefore, who

indulgently does me the honour to peruse these pages, will, I hope, make an excuse for me when he perceives how frequently I seem inclined to make frightened excuses for myself. Nor do I pretend to assume any high order of merit in this work. It is the isolated life of a man who has, in his early productions, turned the slow tide of a certain portion (the middle portion) of the drama into a new, certainly a much stronger light, and set up morality, with his firmest efforts in such sort of works *which was not so before*. Millions of spectators have witnessed the representation of my dramas in England, Scotland, Ireland, and America; and if there be in them the essence of that morality, which I allude to—millions of persons must, in some way or other, have been bettered by their representation. Nor is this all, when I say *isolated*, I mean that the work is, for thirty years, a true history of *one* practical observer of the stage; for although both Knowles, or Planchè could each write a much more elevated book on this subject,

neither of those gentlemen has gone through such a ramification of it in every known theatre, in every species of drama, tragedy, comedy, farce, burlesque, opera, melodrame, pantomime, and monodrame, and that purely as an *Englishman*, without recourse to the French, except per order. Added to this, Mr. Knowles' play would be written according to his *own* taste, and acted accordingly. Mr. Planchè was a great translator; the greatest, probably, that ever did translate for the stage; the actions of his translated pieces were already invented; few had to be invented by himself. Under these reflections, without ascribing any impertinent merit to myself, I must certainly, for the last thirty years, at least, have been the most *practical* author on the boards. I often marvel, now, how I contrived to get things done which I invented. In some of my startling positions, when the performers came to a standstill, Osbaldiston used to say, "It's an *impossibility*; but just let's see how *he's* going to do it." Well, do I remember,

this remark before the four-room'd scene in "Jonathan Bradford." Mr. Egerton, then of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, also, who was a most kind adviser, said to me during the rehearsals of that play, I hear you have a *double scene* in your new drama, at the Surrey, *most dangerous*, at which the actors *laugh behind your back*; take my advice, as a friend, cut it out. At Covent Garden we produced, not long ago, a play called "Venoni," with a double scene, of only *two* chambers, (mine was four) which no one understood. It utterly d——d the piece! Beware! clever as you are, and original as your ideas are, you go too far. Still I persevered; the result has already been told.

From these observations it is still more easy to be comprehended, I trust, *how* anxiously I wish these memoirs to be received as a *rough* history of that stage, over which I walked for nearly the last half century; my own history forming the *under* current. The cry was the decline of the drama, when

I began to write, the great actors, *then*, were only the remnants of greater actors, therefore we may naturally come to this conclusion, that the actors of 1858, are the remnants of those who *then* remained. The third generation. I hope it will not, according to the old Mosaic prediction, proceed to the *fourth*, before a supply of new oil to the declining lamp, is administered by some rising genius, like Kean, or O'Neil, both to astonish and delight mankind. If not, a long farewell to the player. And the legitimate stage itself, a long farewell to all its greatness; it will be as much buried up in the ashes of a few descending years, as the theatres of Pompei, under the ashes of Vesuvius. But as a writer of one of the leading articles in the *Times* once said of Lord *Somebody*, who held forth with great eloquence in the house, he winds his speeches all up, as comfortably as Fitzball does his grand operas, and everybody is delighted. I am not going from my general rule, even here, and therefore, if I throw a somewhat dim shadow over the

histrionic hemisphere, I shall make my utmost endeavour, to turn on a better light before I conclude.

The decline of the stage, and its remedy.

In the first place we want a National Theatre, where plays, &c., are acted, written by *English* authors ; *English*, simply to shew, as we are *first* in all scientific matters, that we are not *disgracefully* behind other nations, in *mental* matters, especially of the drama, the loftiest grade of perfection in any nation, it was so esteemed by the Greeks and the Romans. This national drama, which in my mind, and in the mind of all rational persons, forming, improving the virtuous and noble character of a great people, elevating them from Satyrs to men, is of as great importance to the country as the finest precepts, so often preached, but so little listened to ; and therefore should be, for the country's own credit, assisted *by the country*, as elsewhere. Government ought, most assuredly, to indemnify a *deserving* manager from ruin.

I see the day approaching, when it *will* be so. What is more, we require two other theatres, sustained on the same principle; a grand national opera, and a vaudeville, or demi opera, for *young* composers, and this *will be*, some day, and soon I trust, for the honour of England. Just before my time, gentlemen, with education, taste, and pure love of the drama, with immense fortunes at their command, managed Covent Garden Theatre, who, from want of the very assistance I have quoted, were ruined and swept away, as a reward for their enthusiasm of the divine art, and left to die beggars in a foreign land, since to return to their own, would have been to die in a prison. What has followed for thirty years? Adventurer after adventurer, a succession of speculating and reckless attempts, incited either by avarice or vanity, and a succession of failures, everyone bringing into disrespect, the desecrated altar of our national stage, and why? because it had not the *real national*

support, the support of the government, for which (I speak in unmeasured terms,) the *national* drama of England has become a laughing stock, and a byeword with other lands, far inferior to Englishmen, in mental merit, and instead of being looked up to for imitation, as a great national glory, may well be considered a national *disgrace*.

Managers.—Then for managers of our *national* theatre. Let your manager be neither an *actor*, a *singer*, a *dancer*, nor an author. If an actor, you will get only monodramatic tragedies, or comedies, in which he will play all the monodramatic heroes himself, the other actors all candle-holders. If a singer—ditto, one solo ; if a dancer, ditto, *une pas*, and, like the acting master of a circus, woe to the light pair of heels that jumps higher than his own ; If an author, worse. In the existing state of things a manager has a just right to play all the *best* parts himself, especially as he has to pay for his *own* amusement, which, eventually, he generally does. A national

manager must be business-like, yet a gentleman of taste, elegance, education, not composed of Greek and Latin knowledge *merely*, but a knowledge of the world; liberal, with a mind to appreciate, *detect* incipient genius, and above all, a *real lover* of the drama, and no charlatan, not to fancy, if he has the honour to be patronized by a *queen* or a *king*, that he himself is innoculated with kingliness; (the throne of a theatre royal is one thing; the throne of England or France, quite another,) with not only an innate, but a national desire and pride to promote the glory of the art.

Actors.—If this idea, as I hope, should ever be born out by the legislature, all theatres would then *look up*, like plants that are watered by a kindly hand; actors also: why? they would have *something* to look up to, the *National Theatre*. It would then be no longer a hardship for the poor actor to toil his weary years in the provinces, (especially in great towns, where no doubt, the example set in London, would be

quickly adopted, respecting *their* theatres,) with every probability that his long and settled apprenticeship, having made him a perfect master of his calling, he would find himself transferred, eventually, to the *mighty* temple of his better hopes. It was thus, when the drama was a profession, that Kemble, Siddons, Glover, O'Neil, Edmund Kean, Liston, the elder Mathews, Downton, Munden, Farren, and a long line of gone-by comets, came to town *perfect*; and not as now, Mr. Brown as Hamlet, and Miss Bobbins as Lady Macbeth, their first and *last* appearance on any stage.

Come like shadows, so depart.

There is no longer a great school for great acting; as events are, it would not answer the purpose. Everything is *fast*—the result is *fast*. With a well regulated, *nationally assisted, national* theatre, all these things would find, in a few years, a very *speedy* remedy. It is quite a delusion to suppose that acting can be put on with the costume, or that a man can walk out of the

street, as Mr. Jones, and find himself King Lear before the gas-lights, because he carries a bundle of straw under his arm, and wears a white wig and a wreath of flowers. Neither can acting be *taught*, any more than poetry, though both may be improved by education, as a diamond may be polished by rubbing and grinding. A man must be *born* an actor, as well as a poet; then he must pass an ordeal—walk through the hot ploughshares—the dance of egga. I remember Mr. Wigan when he did not know how to deliver a common message. What a fine actor he *made himself*! Charles Kean, a very *few* years ago, though then a *star*—the name of Kean a tower of strength—was no more to be compared to what he is now than I to Hercules. He seems to me not the *same* man. Witness his Hamlet, his Louis XI., his *perfect* King Lear. But Charles Kean had doubtless in *his* mind for years some theatre of his own to look forward to, and under that great stimulus he was excited to become the actor he now is:

as all players would be under the stimulus of a National Theatre—a *home*—in perspective.

I think I perceive, through the disc of time, a great coming event, casting its shadow before. Mr. Frederick Gye appears to me the very man in the right place to bring to pass this millenium of the drama. He seems, from what I have known of him from a boy, the very manager I have just attempted to describe, of a *real National Theatre*: gentlemanly, highly-educated, great taste, and great insight, without prejudice, and, as he always was, an admirer of the stage. Who knows, some day, and right soon, but the builder of that wonderful edifice Covent Garden, all concocted under the influence of his own strong mind, (my head *aches* to think how,)—who knows but while fostering the genius of the children of song, *he* may see a way from his leviathan ship to throw forth a safety rope towards the drowning children of Melpomene

and Thalia, and the sinking drama of his NATIVE land.

Receive, then, from my humble hand the olive leaf of hope, friends and disciples of the stage, (although I do not pretend to resemble a dove) I feel that the deluge which has so long overwhelmed you, is shortly about to abate, and that a bright sunshine remains behind. This *fervent and sincere prayer*, I trust may plead some excuse for the presumption of these remarks, since, for myself I ask nothing, especially of the stage. As regards *my* future, whether brief or long, what is to be, *will* be, I have seen and suffered too much to anticipate or dread the concluding scene. This little history I reiterate is such a one as cannot happen to another man, the same times cannot occur, to bring about the same round of circumstances, nor re-open the same way. The waters of time have closed over the chasm, like the path in the Red Sea; others may open, but not the same.

· My life is almost that of a hermit. I do not like mixed society ; that is not remarkable, I never did. My nervous deafness is a drawback ; give me the domestic hearth, the familiar face that my heart has long become accustomed to ; though, alas, the *one* face, so loved, and so *familiar* in joy and in grief, in health, and in sickness, has passed away from me, when its pale, endearing smile was most needed ; but memory oft recalls it through a sad, but not unpleasant dream of the past. It is the only image of youth, and of love, that I cannot cease to regret. Time's horseman gallops on. The mind remains, thank God, as firm ; but the body, like a tired pilgrim, worn with travel, longs to sit down on the footstep of some quiet sanctuary, be at rest, contemplate the events of past days, and indulge in delicious hopes of the future.

The sterling old Surrey still wears in itself, the same smiling feature as it did when I first cast therein the hazard of the die. But the old Covent Garden, in whose mys-

teries I was so early and *most* initiated, *has* disappeared. The old theatre, constructed by the Kembles, was a beautiful edifice, so perfect and convenient in every way, built after the plan of the Colloseum in Rome. In case of alarm or accident, an audience could have *been out of the theatre in five minutes* ; no labyrinths to explore. The boxes were white and gold decorated, alternately, with the rose, thistle, and the shamrock ; England was a much more national country in those old-fashioned times. On each side stood the white statues of Melpomene and Thalia, and the lion and unicorn were in the ascendent, supporting the royal arms. A rich *green* curtain, one of the greatest reliefs in a theatre, kept your head from aching, your eyes from being dazzled, and let you know when the play *was* over. This not yet surpassed theatre, for the want of national support, fell beneath *other* hands ; of what became of its *native* actors, many a sad story might be told. An Italian Opera succeeded, beautiful, but

bewildering as a structure to comprehend. This theatre was burnt down during a conjuring exhibition, and *in a few brief months after*, Mr. Gye, of whom I have predicted so much good, has, more astounding than the labours of Hercules, built up a new edifice, radiant to behold, both inside and out; it is one of the most astonishing efforts, (when we consider the time,) of this, or any age. I have witnessed its magnificent opening, with delight and amazement; I only hope that the wonderful constructor of this wonderful building, may be spared from the heavy pressure which overwrought excitement is almost too sure to inflict upon its victims, to make this theatre, not only a national operatic, but in a national acting sense, a glory to his country.

A Dramatic Author.

A few words, by way of addenda, as to the profession and *object* of a dramatic author's life; *many* people object to it; parents especially. In my mind, there is nothing so noble, if properly, viz, morally

conducted ; its sublime purpose is second to nothing, as the author himself is second to no one, neither of the pulpit, nor the bar, nor the senate ; in the promulgation of virtue, of eloquence, of patriotism ; in the attainment of imperishable fame. As a proof of this assertion, look at the undying works of Sophocles, Terence, Euripides, men whose glorious names have as much outlived their countries, as Julius Cæsar, Charlemagne, or Alexander the Great, to say nothing of the ever green, and ever spring-like beauties of our own immortal Shakspeare, although, the younger Zuccato says, the glory of man is no more than the sun is in the water, which reflects his image, there is still something in being *reflectable*. In thus writing, I do not allude to those ephemeral productions, so *insulting* to *common sense*, nightly represented at some of our minor theatres, which, though I have heard others praise them, and that loudly too, are merely, I feel assured, impelled into existence, and produced also, by

necessity, more than from the innate desire of either author or manager. A *real* author is always gifted by nature, with *elevated sentiments*, calculated to improve, not debase the human feelings, nor the mental faculties of his audience, for however low in life the scene of his drama may be laid, it ought always to retain that golden clue of redemption, (religion,) without its being so palpable as to appear like *cant*. It is possible to dissolve a whole audience into tears, with only four words, *judiciously placed*; or to convulse them with laughter, by the simplest *natural* expression, without in the least resorting to absurdity, or sinking into vulgarity, or personality, as we see in the burlesques. But alas, too frequently, as above stated, both author and manager are *compelled*, by necessity, to what is called cater for the vitiated taste of the public, and fall, for pecuniary aid, into a *crime*, for *crime* it is, which must, I feel, find its greatest recompence in *avoidence*. The better to illustrate this argument, if argument it can

be called, I relate here a fact which occurred to myself at the very outset of my career. The unlooked-for effect of my melodramas on the public, induced the then managers of the Surrey, to give me an engagement of six, if not eight pounds per week, by which I bound myself to write for them on *any* subject they might propose, never dreaming of *such* a subject as they did eventually suggest,

The Murder of Wear, by Thurtle.

My blood absolutely chilled at the proposition. I was at that time in great involvements, in delicate health, in fact, without any means but my pen and my engagement. Troubles of every kind stared me in the face, but I resolved neither to degrade myself, my family, nor my reputation, by the comittal of such an atrocity; and although it was held out to me as a *strong* temptation, by the manager, that he had actually purchased the *real shovel* and *cart* connected with the murder, to assist in the *reality* of the intended production,

young as I *then* was, I indignantly threw up my engagement, and quitted the theatre in disgust. Still there was another author who could not perhaps *resist necessity*, and the delight of placing himself in an enviable position, if not altogether willing, did undertake the loathsome task. The piece was both written and represented to *one overwhelming* audience. Whether they played it without a license I know not, but certainly, the Lord Chamberlain *immediately put it down*, to the great satisfaction of the respectable members of that and every other parish in London. Be it remembered the event of which I write, occurred *many* years ago, and reflects great credit on the Surrey Theatre, as to what it soon after that solitary circumstance became, and still remains, one of our most respectable theatres, being managed by gentlemen, (Elliston to wit). In fact, I sincerely believe that this determination of mine to resist necessity, and not lend myself to such a revolting purpose, and its just result, brought about

a perfect revolution in that property, on whose boards the most interesting and beautiful dramas have been since produced ; as for instance, that gem of national natural feeling and sympathy, by Douglas Jerrold, *Black Eyed Susan*.

As a further illustration of what I have recently stated, respecting making your audience laugh by simple means, look at one of the comic characters in this charming drama, Gnatbrain. Where are the eyes that have not twinkled with mirth and delight at his simply stepping out of the closet, Meadows, with the rolling pin in his hand, with two or three quaint words only. A similar comic effect was produced by a mop in "Auld Robin Grey"—but rolling pins and mops are dangerous properties on the stage, if not twirled or brandished by very experienced hands ; and still more so, if not placed in well-thought-of positions. But these are minor trifles, of which the loftier play-writer would take but scornful cognizance. Still, studied in their more impor-

tant and difficult light, than *he* in his seventh heaven dreams of, they would supply even to *his* high sounding epics, a practical lesson, from the want of a knowledge of which the tragedy of the greatest Greek or Latin scholar in the world (Irene) failed to please. I think, in dramatic justice, I am bound to add, here, by way of *morale*, for my young successors, that in less than a week, from my resignation at the Surrey, I had *two* engagements at *two* other theatres, with exactly *doubled* the amount of salary; and when my old manager saw his folly and mistake, and came to offer me *any* terms to return, he was too late; for which I felt some regret, for, notwithstanding all this, he was a very honest and well-disposed man. And we are all of us liable to error, especially where gain is in the perspective. He shortly after wisely relinquished the theatre, and is, if alive, I hope enjoying the result of his past prosperity.*

* When I was a boy, residing in Norwich, John Thurtle being of a most respectable family, was accustomed to visit.

Now to tie the last knot of my *long spun* yarn, I fear I must *long* since have become tedious to the enduring reader. A few more words to the

Non-Conductors of the Drama,
and I have done. By the non-conductors of the drama, I allude to people of puritanical principles, who reject the *rational* amusements of the stage, without knowing *why* or *wherefore*, founding their *great* apprehension on the sublime principle of making unto themselves "the likeness of anything in heaven above, or earth beneath," (a charge to which I'm sure, many of our every-day actors could plead not guilty.) They who raise this ridiculous objection, do not assuredly understand the real translated meaning of that wise injunction, which

at the house of a gentleman, where I, also, was on terms of intimacy with the younger branches, the sons. On one occasion John, who was a smart dashing fellow, sent the lady, as a present, a basket of fine trout, inviting himself to dine on the occasion. The gratitude of the lady knew no bounds, till some months after, her own fishmonger sent in a bill for the trout, which had been set down to her account, and for which she had to pay.

simply alluded to, (in the darker ages of superstition, the crying sin even with Solomon,) the ignorant worship of idols, or the worship of anything on earth or in heaven, (meaning the angels) except the DIVINITY. There is no other way of *expounding* this prohibition. By going to a theatre, a man does not go to idolise or worship the actors, or to bow down to them. He goes to listen to the moralising language which flows like a current of inspiration from the heaven-lighted brain of genius, through the *lips* of the performers (as the hallowed strain of sacred music to which the hater of the drama so frequently listens with awe and devotion,) flows from the solemn organ of a church or cathedral. He goes to see the vices of mankind pictured as in a glass, in their *true* colours, and punished as they deserve, that he may, thereby, receive a lesson of moral instruction; discover, without difficulty, the real path which leads to future peace, or conducts to endless annihilation. What doctrine can be more sublime? And this in

practical illustrations of life as it absolutely exists—examples of good and evil, which, thus conveyed, press themselves how much more deeply on the heart, than a mere book or a homily. Mere language, eloquent as it may be, *cannot* approach such an example. When we read works of the greatest purity, the parables for instance, do we not, in the *theatre* of *our mind's eye*, personify and *dress* the different characters spoken of by the Apostles, as if they were actually before us—in our presence? If then, this invisible agency, in the theatre of the mind, is lighted up by the inspiration of our Maker, what better principle can we imitate to impress upon the expanding thought, especially of youth, the certain recompence of rectitude, or the certain punishment of crime? Even taking it away from this religious sense, to the history of our country, or that of others, what book is equal to the delineations, where the *eye* can read *at once* sentiments, the most noble, patriotic, and elevating to

the mind of man? How many thousands are there who owe their entire knowledge of the history of England to Shakspeare *on the stage*? Had Shakspeare been locked up in the library, instead of being represented on the boards of a theatre, with all his magnificent points on every possible subject, he would have been about as popular as Spencer's "Faerie Queen;" and the millions upon millions who have been edified by his almost unearthly, and instructive genius, have known less about this country, and all those great lessons of the heart, which Shakspeare teaches, than of "Little Jack Horner."

Intellect, aided by the mighty progress of science, which has discovered the appliances of steam to propel loads of enormous magnitude, sent gas through the dark crevices of the earth to lighten cities, laid telegraph cables under the mighty and mysterious deep to hasten telegrams from one end of the world to the other, will, I trust speedily, and in my brief rem-

nant of time, also, discover some *great mental* appliance to the glory—the *permanent enduring* glory of the stage, so sanctified to all classes of society, that no man, whatever his religion, shall longer be ashamed to show his face in a theatre, nor hold up the drama to his son as a stigma and a sin. The mind of every one, at intervals, requires change—a rational amusement, quite as much as the chairs and tables require dusting, or an apartment to be swept or that mind becomes dull, melancholy, if not *morose*, by preying too much upon itself. What amusement can be more rational than a well-written play, well performed, in a well-conducted theatre?—especially when you consider the instruction imperceptibly instilled during its representation. Listen to what the pious Dr. Blair says, who evidently, by the word “improving,” alludes to the drama, in his *Use and Abuse of the World*.—“They “ have been *supposed* to be the best servants “ of God, who abstain most rigidly from

“ all that has the *appearance* of *amusement*.
 “ But how pious and sincere soever the
 “ *intention* of such persons may be, they
 “ certainly take not the properest method
 “ either for *improving* themselves, or for
 “ advancing religion amongst others.”*

The ethereal mantle which I anticipated, would alight on the shoulders of that modern Hercules of modern architecture, Mr. Frederic Gye, threaded in light, seems operatically to have descended on those of Miss Louisa Pyne, and Mr. William Harrison. The music-loving public owe to *their* talents, taste, and perseverance, a deep debt of gratitude. Every Englishman, every English

* During the reign of Augustus, had stage representations been deemed immoral, could they have escaped the disapproval of the Apostles, from whom no impiety could escape? St. Paul even, (in his writings,) refers to the dramatic poets in confirmation of his own sentiments. And what does Dr. Tillotson say? Speaking of plays, he says—“ They might be so framed as not only to be innocently diverting, but conducive to virtue and morality ;
 “ and serve to put vices out of countenance which could
 “ not be decently corrected any other way.” Plutarch thought plays essential to polish and refine the manners of a nation, and instill the noblest principles of honour and virtue.

woman, also, with a single note of melody in his, or her soul, *ought* to support them. If *they* fail, good night, not to Marmion, but to our national Apollo. Public taste, public appreciation, is *nothing* ; music to English ears, a chimera, and a boast.

But if we have national opera at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, and the legitimate drama at Drury Lane, according to the early patent, viz., Tragedy, Comedy, Farce, and Pantomime, the national stage may lift up its head again, the old school of acting revive, and the old statue of Shakspear, over the vestibule of the latter theatre, be no longer ashamed to show its face. Of this last, however, I somewhat despair, unless, as I have before said, national aid will assist its own, and its own Majesty's Servants. After the admirable Macready management, and its failure, who can think otherwise? Mr. Smith has of late years, with great endurance, great tact, and great honour, (paying every one to the utmost,) made Drury Lane answer, but has been

compelled to resort to every known contrariety to the original patent on the surface of the globe, singing, in a *foreign* language, (which when, Charles Kemble years ago would have adopted, merely a scene from a foreign opera for his benefit, the Lord Chamberlain objected to,) dancing, horses, tumblers, and before all, to rely on pantomime. And who is to blame him? Mr. Smith has no objection to Shakspeare, or Sheridan; on the contrary, I never met with a manager more enthusiastic in the cause of both tragedy or comedy, but if your ship is leaking, and the state carpenter, who should stop the gap, looks still and coldly on, how doubly brave and meritorious is the captain, who plunges fearlessly into the discordant waters, and with a stray cable of his own finding, drags his bark ashore the best way he can.

Sunny Balfe has returned, once more to enlist under the old banner, and fight, ere long, heart and hand, through a new campaign, by the side of his old comrade at

the "Siege of Rochelle." With this sparkling announcement, without further remark as to the future, for who shall look deep down into the opaque of time and say "what seed will grow and what will not." The second volume of a *Thirty-five Years Life* comes to a conclusion with about the pleasantest line (to himself,) the author ever wrote in any one of his dramatic works.

ACT LAST—SCENE LAST.

— It was like recalling a page of long-forgotten history to read of the death, the other day, of the veteran Fitzball. It is to be questioned whether the present generation of playgoers ever heard his name; and yet there was a time when, in transpontine circles, he was held to be the genius alike of tragedy or farce, and was deemed of sufficient importance, even in critical circles, to be the occasion of severe attack. He lived on, nevertheless, to a very ripe old age, and has sunk almost forgotten into his grave. Such is life!—the Surrey knows its Fitzball no more, and as for his works, they survive him in the British Museum. A writer in the *Daily News* suggests that they may be studied with advantage by some of his successors, who need not be afraid of borrowing suggestions of a plot or fragments of dialogue, which are not likely to be heard again—at least, on this side of the Thames—in the original. It would be gross ingratitude to forget that the late Mr. Fitzball was an inventor—not an original adapter; and that he was a man, in that capacity, of infinite resource and readiness. He was a native of the village of Burwell, in Cambridgeshire, where he was born about the commencement of the present century. Adding his mother's maiden name of Fitz to his original patronymic of Ball, he came to London, and began his career as a dramatic author with a melodrama called "Edda," which was produced at the Surrey Theatre, then under the management of Tom Dibdin. To this rapidly succeeded the "Innkeeper of Abbeville," "The Floating Beacon," "The Inchcape Bell," "The Flying Dutchman," "The Pilot," "Jonathan Bradford," and a number of other dramas, which obtained great popularity at the minor theatres. For nearly all the early operas composed by Balfe, Mr. Edward Fitzball furnished the libretto; and his popularity as a song-writer may be dated as far back as 1828, when his still favourite song of "My Pretty Jane," linked with Sir Henry Bishop's charming melody, was first sung at Vauxhall Gardens. *Literary World. 7 Nov. 1873.*

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